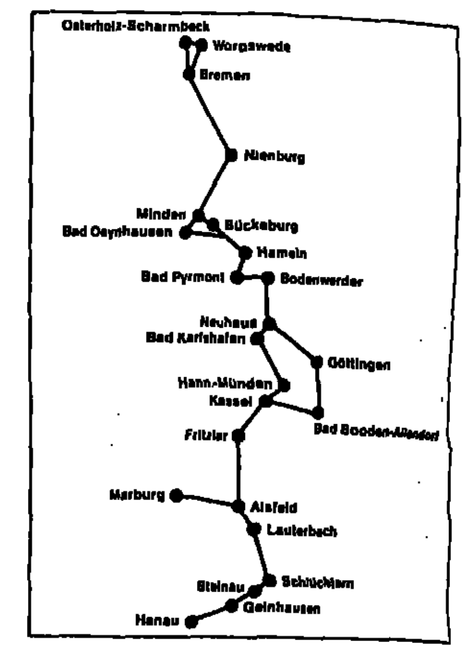
Routes to tour in Germany

The German Fairy Tale Route



1 Bremen
2 Bodenwerder, home of Münchhausen
3 Hanau, birthplace of the Brothers Grimm
4 Alsfeld

German roads will get you there – even if nostalgia is your destination. On your next visit why not call to mind those halcyon childhood days when your mother or father told you fairy tales, maybe German ones? The surroundings in which our great fairy tale writers lived or the scenes in which the tales themselves were set will make their meaning even clearer and show you that many are based on a fairly realistic background.

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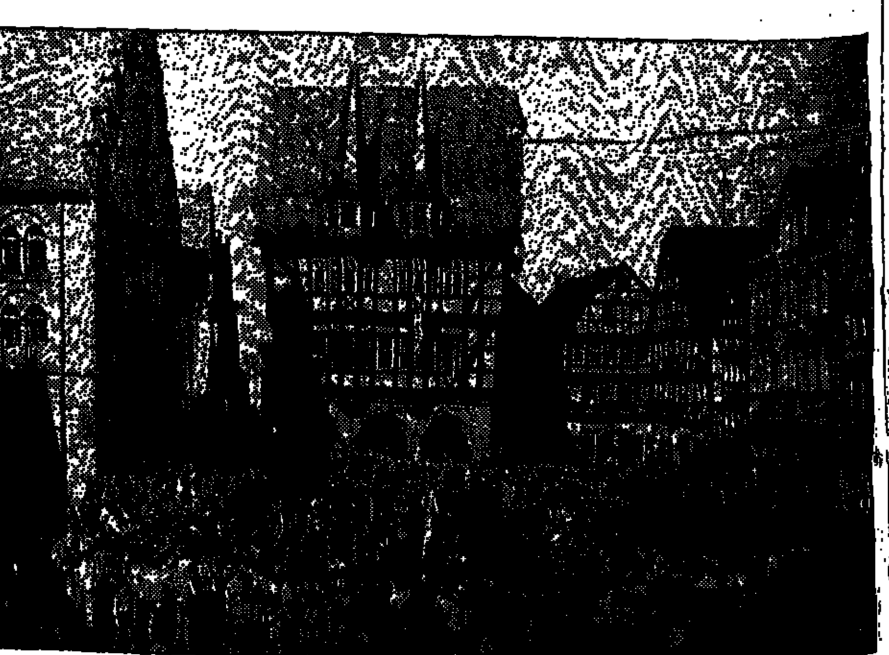
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The German Tribune

Hamburg, 5 February 1989
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Irrationality creeps into disarmament debate



Is there still a negotiating principle for the talks beginning on 6 March in Vienna on conventional disarmament in Europe?

Or will the hand of the West continue to be guided by the never-ending barrage of proposals by the Warsaw Pact up to the point where it is faced by a public opinion which makes any consideration of level-headed negotiations impossible?

The political climate shows that the question is not rhetorical.

The German case illustrates most clearly how the discussion on the East-West conflict concentrates one-sidedly on the question of armament and ignores the real reasons for tension in Europe.

Erich Honecker must have been surprised at the ease with which the discussion on Stalinism in the GDR was headed off.

A beneficent announcement of an arms reduction, and he's already hailed by the German public as an angel of peace — a true ray of light in contrast to the Nato obscurantists.

None other than the head of Nato's military committee, four-star general Wolfgang Altenburg, picked up this signal and called for a proportional reduction of the West German armed forces to a level of 420,000 soldiers in an ad hoc interview with the daily newspaper *Bremer Nachrichten*.

All well and good, but this suggestion flies in the face of the analysis repeatedly articulated by western governments that disarmament in Europe must take place asymmetrically due to the known superiority of the Warsaw Pact in the field of all military equipment required to sustain its invasive capability.

But Altenburg is simply taking up what has already become a political "hit" in the minds of many.

Is this a sign of composure and measuredness in a free society? Is this the leadership we deserve?

An undisciplined running around in all directions, if possible following the latest rhetorical fashion, in line with Talleyrand's sarcastic principle "There goes my people, I must follow for I am its leader"?

It is difficult to imagine how the decision-makers in Bonn intend keeping everything under control if someone as top-ranking as Altenburg thoughtlessly casts aside shared alliance principles such as that of asymmetrical disarmament.

For some time now many German politicians would appear to have lost touch with fundamental principles of security for all the bows they are making to the Gorbachov phenonmenon.

These principles are also disregarded on other occasions. What other explanation is there for the fact that the tragedies in Remscheid and Ramstein triggered such a discussion about our relationship towards the alliance?

The security equation on which our peace and our prosperity are based has apparently been forgotten.

It relates to an alliance of the free and is viewed as a balance between territory and protectors: we provide the territory at the point of intersection of the East-West conflict, the alliance partners provide the additional means — troops and equipment — to help guarantee the realisation of common objectives.

What have these objectives been during the past forty years? To maintain peace as the motor of freedom and thus sustain the appeal of western ideas and values.

In a rebellion of resentment these practical and ideational ramifications are being unhinged.

This has concerned and disrupted the alliance for some time.

It looks as if some kind of irrationality has crept into the minds of those living at the crossroads between East and West in the shadow of guaranteed Nato protection.

They look towards Utopian horizons. Wishful thinking makes the German border disappear from contemporary history as if by magic and hears only the friendly rhetoric practised by the East bloc for several months now.

This situation leads to a confused orientation. Friends suddenly become occupiers and the real occupiers, in the GDR for example, become friends who have no other intention but to disarm.

Apparently, there is no obstacle along the path to wishful thinking which a friendly gesture by an East bloc leader cannot remove.

During his recent visit to the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, Soviet Politburo member A. Jakovlev had the following to say about the memorial of disillusionment, the Berlin wall:

"It's not our wall. We didn't build this wall. It's a matter for the GDR."

Gone, as if by magic, the Soviet Union's historical "paternity" for this deplorable monument of contemporary history, gone the responsibility of the Kremlin once confirmed by Khrushchov in an interview.

No more obstacles, or so it would seem, to the sentimental German-Russian embrace, relieving the parties concerned of the burden of having to think too seriously about the coordinates of the world in which we live and of the worlds which divide us.

All efforts are made to forge a link with the help of practicable diplomacy.

This article does not advocate a rejection of such diplomacy. On the contrary.

Yet all sense of reason rebels against the growing signs in the Federal Republic of Germany of leaderlessly drifting into conflict-free euphoria.

It is a form of euphoria which only seems to detect conflicts in relations with alliance partners.

Does the Bonn government grasp the power of this tendency?

Sometimes the impression is gained that it does not.

Immediately before the revelation of the true Libyan connection, for example, Chancellor Helmut Kohl preferred to chide "the Americans" for their campaign.

And during the chemical arms conference in Paris at the end of last year the USA also was "accused" by West German politics as a country which stands in the way of a worldwide elimination of chemical weapons.

Alliance positions seem to be insignificant. All that counts is flustered public

Continued on page 2





Berlin's agony and ecstasy: Left, the city's CDU mayor, Eberhard Diepgen, with Chancellor Helmut Kohl in background at post-election post-mortem; at right, SPD national deputy chairman Oskar Lafontaine (left) and mayoral candidate Walter Momper discuss their party's success. (Photos: Sven Simon)

Shock rise by extreme right in Berlin poll

The emergence of the extreme right-wing Republican Party was the shock of the West Berlin elections. In a result that surprised all observers, the Republicans won about 8 per cent of the vote. The SPD gained about 4 percentage points over the last election in 1985 and seems certain to emerge as the biggest single party, just ahead of the governing CDU, which fared disastrously, losing 10 percentage points. No party has an overall majority. There is little indication of what coalition will emerge. The Free Democrats, junior partner in the Bonn coalition, lost votes and will have no member in the new assembly. Results (subject to slight change): CDU 36.2 per cent (46.4 in 1985), 46 seats (69 in old assembly); SPD 37.8 (32.4), 48 (48); AL 12.3 (10.6), 15 (15); FDP 3.8 (8.5), 0 (12); Rep 8.0 (0.0), 10 (0). Difference in number of seats is because of adjustments in line with proportional representation formula.

The West Berlin election came is a shock to all democrats. The sensational losses by the ruling CDU-FDP coalition, the astonishing gains by the SPD and the continuing advance of the Alternative List were, on theirown, not unsurprising, even though they imply a fundamental reshuffling of power in the city.

The shock is the unexpected success of the extreme right-wing Republican Party.

The CDU was convinced that all it needed was a smiling leader, which they had in the mayor, Eberhard Diepgen, to blow way all the political scandals of the past few months. It was mistaken.

The FDP suffered from the CDU's

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■ THE LIBYAN AFFAIR

Scandal seems more like the right word

The murky affair surrounding the involvement of German firms in the construction of the Libyan chemicals plant in Rabta will continue to haunt us.

New details of the role played by these firms, some held in good repute, in a project which could turn out to be a real war-risk factor in the Middle East, are surfacing almost daily.

The extent of their entanglement already makes the use of the word affair look like an attempt to play down the issue.

Isn't the word scandal a more apt description for something which has had such a disconcerting impact on West German politics?

Scandal is a better choice because of the self-righteousness involved, the desperate attempt to save face even after the writing was already on the wall.

In a situation in which greater personal commitment to limit the damage would have been much more expedient Chancellor Helmut Kohl initially acted as if the whole thing was a bare-faced lie.

Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who wanted to force the United States back on to the path of virtue in the field of chemical weapons, suddenly found himself sitting in the dock.

Not that any member of the Bonn government has made himself guilty of aiding and abetting the sale of poison-gas substances to Libya or stalled investigations or denied facts.

The Libya scandal is a conglomeration of embarrassment, sleepiness and pusillanimity following a rude awakening.

The calls now made to limit the damage caused by the scandal are late insights that the credibility of German politics may suffer.

The crux of the matter is the conflicting relationship between morals and business.

Profitmongering exporters have acted with unscrupulous indifference in line with the motto: what the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve about. The black sheep of an industrialised society, whose activities are profit-orientated as well as orientated towards guaranteeing jobs, repeatedly succumb to the temptation of dealing in arms or other instruments of war.

Rabta is not a unique case. Memories are revived of scandals concerning tanks, submarines and fissile material.

The latest Tornado aircraft deal show the fatal tendency, despite all the good intentions of great restraint — especially following the experiences of the past — to open the floodgates for exports of top-quality products from the German arms industry.

Motives and effects are often very vague in this field. Trading in chemicals makes it clear that potentially toying with the lives of thousands is not just the result of the greed and avarice of the industrialised world.

One and the same chemical substance can be put to a wide variety of uses.

Developing countries show a substantial interest in gaining access to scientific and technological know-how by means of export agreements.

Only in very few cases is the ulterior motive the abuse of this know-how for purposes of war.

In most cases interest centres on pharmaceutical products to improve health and save lives or crop protection substances and fertiliser to enable human existence in inhospitable regions.

A scandal only occurs if these substances are misused or if exporters close their eyes to the possible consequences of their action.

Irrespective of whether they send ominous barrels and equipment or engineers to work on mysterious building sites.

It's difficult to see clearly through this thicket. In the Libya case the customs crime investigators and the public prosecutor have to look for a needle in a haystack. A key aspect is finding evidence which can stand up in court.

As Chancellor Kohl emphasized in Washington, no-one wants to turn Germany into a banana republic.

Criticism of the insistence on evidence which can "stand up in court" was rooted in the impression that it was designed to gloss over the fact that the Bonn government had taken so long to react to the information on the Libyan connection.

One of the striking features of the scandal in Bonn is the failure of the early warning system. It is still incomprehensible how Bonn was able to overlook all the alarm signals.

A Chancellor was surrounded by clever ministerial colleagues and experienced advisers, a foreign minister, with a worldwide reputation for his sense of danger.

Many pointers towards possible German involvement in Rabta have been accumulating since last May.

In Bonn, however, no-one felt it necessary to organise a crisis management to clarify the suspicions with the help of corresponding investigations and then take the necessary measures.

The result was a crushing series of international media revelations and an almost undignified begging to the Americans by the Bonn government that they should acknowledge the seriousness of German efforts to clarify the affair.

If it is true that over a dozen US tip-offs on the Libyan connection found their way into Bonn's filing cabinets together with the inadequate information furnished by the intelligence agency, BND, it is surprising how accommodating Washington has been.

The real cause of the damage to German politics is bumbling behaviour. To the international community it now looks as if the most ardent supporter of a worldwide ban on chemical weapons is trying to hide a blot on its own escutcheon.

The advocate of extensive disarmament now stands accused of having turned a blind eye to the proliferation of technology for use in war for the sake of safeguarding its own economic system.

What can be done to limit the damage?

The much-praised tightening of laws and stipulations is something which should have carried out a long time ago.

However, there are already signs of legal reservations and indications that progress will only be made at a snail's pace.

Presumably, to ensure that, whatever happens, the peaceloving trading nation suffers no losses.

Thomas Meyer

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 28 January 1989)

Continued from page 1

opinion at home. "Peace" becomes a very empty word in the mouth of a policy which must be suspected of avoiding the acceptance of realities.

From such a position the British, Canadians, French and Americans do not need to lecture. Nor does the German public.

What we need is the advice of eloquent reason, not the soporific impact of an unrealistic policy.

Thomas Kielinger

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 27 January 1989)

Arms exports the Achilles Heel of foreign policy

It is only fair to point out that the Bonn government has not fostered a climate of complicity during the affair surrounding the alleged exports of installations to a chemical weapons factory in Libya.

Those who did any dirty deals knew exactly what crime they were committing.

Bonn's inability to find a way out of the poison-gas nightmare, more and more of which is turning out to be reality, is the result of bumbling and ill-fated crisis management rather than of double moral standards.

Nevertheless, the government must be accused of producing a situation during recent years in which looking the other way has come into fashion in the field of arms exports, the Achilles heel of West German foreign policy.

The spiral of controversial arms deals already began to turn under the Schmidt government.

The argument then was that jobs have to be guaranteed, an argument which tolerated no contradiction.

And as this led to substantial production capacities the arms industry was obliged to "canvass for custom": in South Africa, in Jordan, in South Korea, almost everywhere.

A close examination of the good reputation of the recipients simply involved too much time and effort.

First of all, the veto on the exports of joint development with France in this field was dropped, then followed by the same gesture towards Britain.

The Bonn government now makes it clear that it is willing to jettison the very last principles of its formerly restrictive arms export policy.

There is no other way of interpreting Bonn's decision not to finance the British deliveries of the Tornado aircraft to Jordan with public funds, but to give political backing to the partly state-controlled Bayerische Landesbank in its role as consortium leader of a "private" group of banks.

In the light of the second part of the decision the first can only be regarded as opportunism.

The second part is an example of the unfortunate practice of not directly supporting arms exports but doing very little to prevent it taking place in line with the backdoor method.

This encourages all those to keep on turning the spiral who look forward to a lucrative future if the Federal Republic of Germany becomes an armoury.

Although Bonn Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Chancellor Kohl are sat in the same boat in the Libya affair Genscher is highly critical of Kohl's policy with regard to the Tornado issue.

He apparently realises more than others how churned up the waters are into which Bonn has sailed.

Apart from the hypocrisy with which the Kohl government is handling the Tornado problem, Bonn is stuck in an objective dilemma.

Anyone who wants to protect Europe must be in favour of Europe being able to defend itself.

Because of their tremendous costs for individual countries modern weapon systems can only be built in joint production.

This, however, also means that cooperation partners must have the right to export such systems.

Anyone who feels that this is irresponsible must demand the termination of corresponding agreements with Paris, London, Rome or Madrid.

No-one who feels committed to the existing security policy consensus disputes this right.

But where does it say that the Bonn government has to assume political responsibility on behalf of banks for a British export deal with a region in which London can act in a completely different manner than Bonn?

Margaret Thatcher may not have paid much attention to Helmut Kohl's objections. But he didn't even express any.

In this dilemma Bonn would be well-advised to take on the role of doubter, not just "for show" but with the aim of averting foreseeable damage. Yet there weren't even consultations.

Does the Chancellor really soothe his conscience with the vague British references that Israel does not regard the deal as a threat?

If claims are true that the protests which came from Jerusalem were no more than an obligatory exercise one can only ask whether all parties concerned in Bonn realise what they have let themselves in for.

Taxpayers will again be asked to pay up for a compensatory deal for the Tornado affair.

Israel always welcomes loans and German submarines are very popular, to be delivered via a third party, of course.

The spiral of arms exports turns faster and faster.

In future, Mrs Thatcher would like joint financing of jointly produced weapons.

It was already a mistake to drop the principle that weapons should not be supplied to areas of tension.

European cooperation may now lead to new adventures. It would be unrealistic to expect the current Bonn coalition to stop the spiral from turning.

But it should at least take the rest of its own principles seriously.

If Helmut Kohl fails to rectify his Tornado decision he may find that the situation is out of his control.

German arms exports should only be allowed to Nato countries. Under no circumstances should Bonn accept political responsibility for exports by cooperation partners.

The economic benefits to be had from arms exports for the West German arms industry are low, the already foreseeable damage to foreign policy substantial.

Udo Bergdoll

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 27 January 1989)

The German Tribune

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■ THE LIBYAN AFFAIR

Imbroglio around chief of intelligence agency



Speculation about the possible replacement of the president of the Federal intelligence agency (BND), Hans-Georg Wieck, has again put West German intelligence activities into the public eye.

"It is obvious that the secret nature of the operations of the intelligence organisations is a source of suspicions," said Waldemar Schreckenberger, permanent secretary in the Bonn Chancellery and coordinator of the three branches of Bonn's intelligence network: the Federal Intelligence Service (BND), the counterintelligence organisation MAD, and the Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV).

The government in Bonn at least has been suspiciously eyeing the activities of the Munich-based BND for some time now.

This led to speculation about a replacement for Wieck, 60, as head of BND.

On 23 January former diplomat Wieck, once Bonn's ambassador in Teheran and Moscow and an excellent Nato ambassador, flew to submit his report on BND activities to Bonn.

This time on a Wednesday, usually on a Tuesday, Wieck informed the Chancellor's office about his organisation's latest findings.

Right from the start Wieck has never disguised the fact that he does not regard Schreckenberger as the appropriate partner in discussions.

The experienced reconnoiterer regards it as even more humiliating if he has to submit his report to the head of the security department, Hermann Jung.

Wieck prefers to inform the Chancellor, the Bonn President and the Foreign Minister personally.

His information policy has often caused annoyance in Bonn.

Schreckenberger once dictated to Wieck who can be told about what BND information and when. The Chancellor's office did not feel properly informed in connection with the Libya affair and was unhappy about Wieck's alleged efforts to show the ability of his agents in a more favourable light.

There was talk of "double dealing" following claims that Wieck had provided newspapers not too friendly towards the government with information gathered by the BND on the Libya affair.

This need not be the case. After all, others may also have an interest in spreading about BND information.

What is more, this kind of information policy would be highly counterproductive for the BND.

It took weeks before the government in Bonn was forced to admit that Colonel Gaddafi is on the supply list of a number of German firms.

For a long time government spokesman Friedhelm Ost emphasized that there was no "evidence which can stand up in court."

It is not the BND's job to provide such evidence. Its task is to obtain information, which must then be looked into by the persons informed.

If, however, corresponding tip-offs are ignored it makes services superfluous.

Anyone who believe the BND is some kind of public prosecutor's office is wrong.

It is the client who must interpret the significance of the information — and the client here is the Chancellor's office in Bonn.

For many years, for example, the BND analysed the offensive capability of the Warsaw Pact; Bonn believed the information without having the possibility of verification.

But Bonn was not so keen on believing the satellite photos it received from the BND on the factory in Rabta.

The only difference between these photos and those by the CIA from the same perspective was the scale.

Bonn's accusation that the BND only "borrowed" its information from the Americans is not correct.

In the meantime journalists and news agencies are already gathering information on Wieck's life history in the building nicknamed the *Doktorhaus* because of the habit of the BND founder, Reinhard Gehlen, to travel incognito as Doctor Schneider.

But in the hermetically sealed military no-go area in Munich no-one believes that a replacement is in the offing. After all, Chancellor Kohl would be ill-advised to saddle himself with a secret service affair at the moment.

Like his predecessors Wieck made changes in the agency's style. Under Gehlen's successor, Gerhard Wessel, efforts were made to not only erase the slouch coat image, but also to introduce sophisticated technology.

With a total payroll of an estimated 6,500 Wieck again placed greater emphasis on the traditional role of agents.

But Wieck himself does not live beneath a cloak of secrecy. Even his hobbies, cooking, squash and gardening, are common knowledge.

In a BND brochure to mark the agency's 30th anniversary is the following: "One should refrain from talking of successes."

This time someone did talk about a success — but to begin with no-one in Bonn wanted to know.

Ekkehard Kohrs

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 24 January 1989)

Continued from page 1

problems and it did not even get the five per cent needed for parliamentary representation.

The fact that the SPD did well is less surprising. Four years ago it had its worse result ever in Berlin. It benefited this time by concentrating on issues rather than personalities.

Above all, the financial repercussions of the Bonn government's health reform law, especially for older people, was welcome for the SPD campaign in a city with many old people.

The question is: will it stick to its pre-election rejection of any coalition with the Alternative List.

Most of the Republican votes came from the CDU's right-wing. Many voted Republicans because they felt that mayor Diepgen's efforts to improve contacts with East Berlin have gone too far.

The party also benefited from hostility to foreigners and fear of streetfighting radical groups.

Does the election mean democrats should more actively show their much-vaunted solidarity? A grand coalition, perhaps, between the SPD and the CDU?

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 30 January 1989)

The shy man at the centre comes back into the limelight

After stepping down as head of the Chancellor's office in Bonn in November 1984, Waldemar Schreckenberger almost fell into oblivion.

The Libyan factory affair has changed that. It has brought Chancellor Kohl's former school pal and luckless administrator of the early years of the Kohl government back into the limelight.

The main reason is the controversial role of the intelligence agency, BND; and even more so the alleged efforts by the head of the BND, Hans-Georg Wieck, to brush up his public image.

Today, Schreckenberger is responsible in the Chancellor's office for coordinating the activities of the secret service network.

For five years he had been permanent secretary alongside of the Chancellor office minister, Wolfgang Schäuble.

It's easy to image what the relationship between Schreckenberger, who tends to be an introvert, and the extremely self-assured Wieck is like.

Schreckenberger's comments on this point are restrained.

He says that this kind of relationship has "good and bad days"; it is obvious that "there are differences of opinion"; at most he has expressed a "certain displeasure."

All that these remarks suggest is a touch of teeth-gritting.

During his years in the Chancellor's office Schreckenberger frequently demonstraed this kind of self-control.

Right from the moment Chancellor Kohl asked him to leave the Rhineland-Palatinate Justice Ministry and come to Bonn he has been talked about. His name was linked with a great many of the slip-ups suffered by the Kohl government.

Together with his confused and almost shy behaviour in public he was soon turned into a popular object of pitiless ridicule by Bonn's insiders.

Schreckenberger reacted in line with the motto: the good administrative official stays silents and carries on working.

Admittedly, this attitude was rooted in a fair extent of intellectual self-confidence. This sense of self-esteem is not unjustified.

Schreckenberger was born in Ludwigshafen. He built up a respectable career as a lawyer in Mainz.

In 1976 he became head of the state chancellery there before being appointed Justice Minister in 1981.

At the same time he pursued a university career and became professor for legal and political philosophy in Speyer. One of his main subjects was "rhetorical semiotics."

It was no more than natural that he should take on a judicial or administrative post after his replacement as head of the Chancellor's office.

There were rumours that he might take on a post in the Federal Audit Office or a judicial post at the Federal Constitutional Court.

Out of loyalty to Kohl or out of personal headstrongness, however, he stayed on in the Chancellor's office.

Hermann Rudolph

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 26 January 1989)



Likes cooking and gardening . . . Intelligence chief Wieck. (Photo: Werek)

Information was passed on to newspaper

The head of the Bonn intelligence gathering agency, BND, Hans-Georg Wieck, did pass on information about the Libyan factory-in-the-desert affair to German newspapers and magazines. This has emerged despite the difficulties proving it.

And, despite all the denials in the Chancellor's office that no-one was annoyed about Herr Wieck, the Chancellor is "not amused."

And despite all the conjecture about Wieck's possible dismissal, he seems likely to stay in office.

Once again, Wolfgang Schäuble, minister without portfolio in the Chancellor's office and a man with a good sense of proportion, has to smooth over the embarrassing affair.

The Bonn government has undeniably come unstuck because of the political mismanagement of the still unclear affair concerning the involvement of German firms in the building of an alleged poison-gas factory in Libya.

However, there are too many know-alls who say with hindsight that the Bonn government should have taken more seriously the BND tip-offs it received much earlier.

They forget the fact that these tip-offs were not only extremely vague, but that they were picked up by the American secret service.

Everyone in Bonn knows how allergically Washington reacts to anything connected with Libya.

It was right to instruct the BND to try and discover evidence of its own.

It was wrong, however, for the head of the BND to pursue his own press policy to prevent politicians from finding fault with the quality of his organisation.

It is obvious that secret service information provides indications rather than watertight evidence with exact statements on the source of the information.

What is more, the BND has already made mistakes in the past. In one case this cost the government DM14m.

In the light of BND information it decided to take a chemicals producer to court under charges of illegal export business, but the court awarded the businessmann damages on the ground of a false accusation.

The BND's job is to furnish the government with information; the government's job is to decide how useful the information is and what steps should be taken.

Heinz Schweden

(Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf, 24 January 1989)

■ MINORITY GROUPS

Regional moves to give the vote to foreigners in local elections

Parliamentarians are often tempted to try and speed things up a bit: they often complain about being so constrained by the instructions of governments and their bureaucracies that they have little scope to develop their own initiative.

Their desire to occasionally show ministers and bureacrats who really has the pants on according to the classic understanding of democracy is only too understandable.

It was this such a desire which apparently prompted the SPD parliamentary party in the North Rhine-Westphalian state assembly to decide to grant foreigners the right to vote in local government elections in this *Land*.

The Social Democrats even fixed a schedule for the realisation of this plan.

The corresponding amendment to the law will come into force in 1994, in time for the next series of local government elections but one.

It is hoped that the plan will make its way through the state assembly in 1990/1991 so that there's plenty of time left for an examination of its constitutionality — something those opposed to the idea may demand.

In the meantime, the SPD would like to see a promotion of the "acceptance" of the right of foreigners to vote at municipal elections by "political measures."

There are doubts, however, whether the SPD politicians have done their homework properly.

The state assembly MPs can refer back to a resolution adopted during the SPD's regional party congress in October 1987, in which a demand was made for the right of foreigners to vote and to stand for political office. Exact criteria were not defined.

What is more, party congress demands do not necessarily reflect social and political realities.

A state assembly hearing on this subject already poured cold water on the plan.

The majority of lawyers questioned on this issue viewed the whole idea as impracticable without a change in the West German constitution.

This explains the restraint demonstrated by North Rhine-Westphalia's Premier Johannes Rau and Interior Minister Schnoor with regard to the initiation of legislation. They were apparently afraid of a constitutional conflict.

The SPD parliamentary party executive led by Friedhelm Farthmann did very much the same thing at the end of November by announcing its misgivings about the project.

At the moment the city-state of Hamburg is working on franchise for foreigners.

The success of activities there could give an indication of the chances of similar projects elsewhere.

The spearheading move by the SPD parliamentary party in North Rhine-Westphalia should have been precisely mapped out.

What prevented the MPs from formulating a draft bill? Why wasn't the vote accompanied by a detailed declaration making the case of the supporters of the plan plausible?

Why didn't the parliamentarians list the demands they wish to connect with the right of foreigners to vote?



The announcement by the regional CDU to take legal action against the project on the grounds of un-constitutionality already shows the obstacles ahead.

The foreigners issue is an emotionally charged one in the Federal Republic of Germany.

This does not just apply to the man in the street but to politicians in high places, such as the Bavarian minister of state who expressed his concern that the German population was becoming a mixture of too many races (the German term used, *durchrasst*, is reminiscent of the racist terminology used by the Nazis).

Anyone who wants to improve the situation of foreigners and strengthen their rights must be armed with convincing arguments.

There are good reasons for introducing franchise for foreigners at local government level.

The remark by Bonn parliamentary secretary of state Horst Waffenschmidt (CDU) that this is "clearly unconstitutional" is by no means undisputed.

In the municipalities the principle of self-administration prevails. This distinguishes them from the Federal Government and the *Länder*.

Why shouldn't foreigners who have long since made Germany the pivotal point of their lives and who have become a permanent part of the population be entitled to have a say in decisions on schools, kindergarten, social services and urban redevelopment?

Referring to this subject, Ernst Benda, former president of the Federal Constitutional Court and CDU Interior Minister, once said:

"At local government level you can talk about it, at national level you can't."

He added that the opinion of the jurists needn't necessarily be the correct one.

Benda pointed towards an important point. The discussion about the right of foreigners to vote in the Federal Republic of Germany generally runs along legal rather than political lines.

It is not clear whether this is due to a feeling of resentment and fear towards foreigners and thus reflects a hint of xenophobia.

Sweden, Denmark and Holland have fared well with their experiences of a franchise for foreigners at local government level.

All predictions about growing aggressiveness and political radicalisation there proved wrong.

The German discussion on this issue, in which many jurists stubbornly stick to the nation-state concept of a German "people", almost seems eerie in view of the envisaged European internal market at the end of 1992: moving closer together on the one hand, isolationism on the other.

The plan to introduce franchise for foreigners would undoubtedly be an acid test of how serious politicians are about the integration they so often preach of the "guest workers" — without simply asking them to become naturalised Germans.

The government in Bonn, especially Bonn Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann, however, seem to be moving in a different direction.

The reform of the Aliens Law is still blocked because Zimmermann had been unable so far to push through his restrictive proposals, which are rejected by the trade union, religious groups and the junior coalition partner FDP.

If — as so often in the past — yet again let the Constitutional Court judges take the final decision on this issue they are missing an opportunity to keep the reins of political initiative in their hands.

Heinz Verfürth

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 20 January 1989)

Despite changes, asylum right is rooted in constitution

Not a day passes without some kind of attack asylum rights. Bonn Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann and Baden-Württemberg Premier Lother Späth act as if there was a state of emergency.

Political language is being mobilised: "escape routes" are being cut off, "deterrence" practised.

Last year, 103,076 foreigners sought asylum in Germany — almost as high as in 1980.

According to the Interior Ministry in Bonn only one thing can stem the tide of asylum applicants: a constitutional amendment.

Indeed, everything else has been tried out in recent years. The status of the asylum seeker was made more and more unappealing.

An employment ban was imposed — for one year to begin with and then two.

Today, this "decreed loafing" — as the deceased president of the Federal Constitutional Court, Wolfgang Zeidler, once put it — now lasts five years.

Welfare assistance was reduced and then paid out in non-cash form. Accommodation was organised in refugee camps.

Amendments have streamlined the recognition procedures, and the Asylum Procedure Act of 1982 reduced legal protection to a minimum. And all this hasn't really helped? On the contrary, the number of refugees fell rapidly from almost 108,000 in 1980 to less than 20,000 in 1983.

Since then, however, it has risen steadily and reached the new peak last year.

Perhaps it isn't primarily the economic and social appeal of Germany which persuades asylum seekers to come here, but the pressure exerted in their native countries.

This at any rate is the opinion of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The entry barriers for refugees have long since become virtually insurmountable in many countries.

It has become compulsory for refugees from the majority of African and Asian countries to obtain a visa.

The diplomatic missions there have been ordered to refuse potential asylum seekers a visa, and the airline companies requested not to transport foreigners without a visa.

A victim of persecution, however, cannot apply for asylum abroad. He must at least get to the German border first.

This "channelling of the influx of political refugees" has worked: the number of asylum seekers from the Third World has steadily declined.

Refugees from other countries, however, have filled the gap. Anyone who flees because of starvation has never been granted asylum anyway.

The courts have become more and more restrictive in their interpretations of the letter of the law when it comes to deciding who is to be recognised as a victim of political persecution and is thus entitled to political asylum.

The silent change in the interpretation of constitutional provisions has led to a situation in which only nine out of 100 applicants for asylum are actually granted it.

The refugees whose applications have been turned down stay in the country as *de facto* refugees.

This is not a result of the liberal-mindedness of the authorites, but of the legal obstacles to their deportation.

Most of the applicants refused political asylum in the light of Article 16 of the West German constitution turn to the asylum guaranteed on humanitarian grounds by Section 14 of the Aliens Law and in the Geneva Convention on refugees.

These legal provisions are identically worded and state that no foreigner shall be deported to a country "in which his life or his freedom are threatened on the grounds of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a certain social class or political convictions."

The Bonn Interior Minister admits that there is currently no means of disputing the right of these *de facto* refugees to stay in Germany.

The attacks on the right of asylum anchored in the constitution suggest that all this would change if the basic right to asylum were to be abolished or at least restricted.

However, the gagging of the Article 16 during recent years already showed that Zimmermann and Späth nurtured false hopes of their clientele.

The greater the restrictiveness of the constitutional right of asylum, the greater the significance of other legal safeguards.

Unsuccessful applicants have simply turned to the Geneva Convention. Nothing else would happen if the right of asylum were watered down.

A new procedure would evolve in which the refugees would try to assert their rights.

This legal situation could only be altered by terminating the international Geneva agreement.

Yet even if the Convention for Refugees were to be torn up the refugees would still have a right of asylum.

It is rooted in one of the central provisions of the constitution — in the

Continued on page 5

■ PERSPECTIVE

Armed forces: troubles in the ranks

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Politicians, soldiers and journalists have been warning about a crisis in the Bundeswehr (the official collective name of the armed forces) for many years.

It would not be long, they claimed, before an unwilling and demotivated army of conscripts with exaggeratedly expensive equipment and on obsolete organisational structure would be required to guarantee the freedom and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Germany on the basis of a strategy which dates back to the beginning of the 1960s.

It would be confronted by the indifference of most West Germans on matters relating to defence and the opposition of a relatively large minority.

Kohl, Geissler and Wörner and their political and military vavasours dismissed such cries of warning as the propaganda of prophets of doom and irresponsible pacifists.

Today, the state of the armed forces and the mood of the population towards the Bundeswehr corresponds to a large degree to this scenario.

This is, of course, connected with terrible tragedies, such as the inferno of the Ramstein air show and the air crash in Remscheid.

The real reasons, however, are rooted in a fundamentally misguided defence policy on the part of the decision-makers in the Bonn Defence Ministry.

For example, the practice of sticking to old habits despite the fact that the foreign and defence policy frameworks have changed.

The unfortunate new structure of the Bundeswehr, including the controversial extension of the period of military service from 15 to 18 months, is a case in point.

The final objective of this reform was already clear before all the weighing up of pros and cons began: the peacetime strength of the Bundeswehr must stay at a level of 495,000 soldiers.

In reality, however, there is not enough money and an insufficient number of conscripts and extended-service volunteers (who sign up for military duty voluntarily for a specific period of time).

In view of the development in the field of conventional arms control the security policy arguments for this objective have also lost their clout.

The Cabinet railroaded this structural reform, which stands no chance of living up to expectations, through parliament.

A lot of tricks have been used to improve the picture. Some of the soldiers in the group of discharged reservists included in the Bundeswehr's actual (effective) strength figure.

It is claimed that the number of brigades will only decrease by six to a total of 42.

In reality, however, there will probably only be 28 fully effective brigades left following the implementation of the "Army Structure 2000" plan, the rest retaining only between 50 and 70 per cent of their current strength.

No problem! After all, we've got millions of trained and motivated reservists. Wrong!

According to a survey by the extremely loyal reservist association, almost seventy-five per cent of the reservists in one army corps refuse to voluntarily carry out reserve duty training exercises in future. Not to mention the financial aspect.

Six months ago the Bundeswehr Chief of Staff said that he needed DM36.5bn more to be able to guarantee forward defence with the new army.

Despite all these facts and figures no fundamental changes have been made regarding the question of effective troop strength or the strategy of task distribution in the alliance.

If this isn't a misguided defence policy, what is? Under the Kohl government there has been an unparalleled instrumentalisation of the Bundeswehr and its needs in the interests of industrial promotion.

The Euro-fighter project was primarily intended to put an aircraft industry with surplus capacities back on its feet.

For the air force and the Bundeswehr the jet is too expensive, and too few units are being delivered.

The Franco-German project "Anti-tank Helicopter-2" has long since become a "case". There are rumours of unit costs of DM30m.

Because of such projects urgently needed investments such as the modernisation of the mechanised unit or the reorganisation of the airborne troops have had to be shelved.

Whereas former Bonn Defence Minister and ex-pilot Wörner pursued particularist interests the current Defence Minister Scholz, a jurist, lacks "an overall perspective", say Bundeswehr staff officials.

On top of their annoyance at the politicians there is mounting frustration among the troops about more internal problems.

Loss of esteem

Longer-serving members of the army criticise the frequent transfers, the long hours of duty and the loss of social esteem.

The opinion on the meaning and the organisation of military service among former conscripts is catastrophic.

77,000 of the potential recruits in 1988 refused to do military service, more than ever before.

Yet the West German army is sustained and characterised by these conscripts.

Their biggest problem is not so much the traditional "lazing around" often criticised in the Bundeswehr, but the fact that they don't know why they are wearing their olive-green jackets.

Neither parents nor schools have apparently been able to explain to the recruits why there is a need for conscription in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Opinion surveys give an idea of what young people think in this respect, and very few recruits believe what they're told in the Bundeswehr's political instruction lessons.

Frustration and uncertainty exist from the infantryman right up to the general. A crisis? Far from it!

Kurt Kister

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 19 January 1989)

Conscription and the parade grounds of Europe

The government intends lengthening conscription from 15 to 18 months. It intends taking a tougher line on exemptions; and it wants the size of the army to decline from 341,000 to 324,000 over the next four years, which it maintains it can do without losing efficiency. This article in *Die Welt* looks at how other European countries, including the Warsaw Pact nations, are coping with defence forces.

DIE WELT

The problems Germany faces in maintaining its military strength through conscription are not the same as in other European Nato countries.

Most Western European armies are composed of regular soldiers and conscripts in varying proportions.

In Spain's armed forces there are 309,500 soldiers, 206,000 of which are conscripts; Portugal has 73,900 soldiers, including 44,800 conscripts; Norway's army is 35,800-man strong, 23,000 of which are conscripts; Denmark's armed forces consist of 29,300 soldiers, 8,400 of which are conscripts; 88,300 soldiers wear a Belgian uniform, 26,500 of which are doing military service; and the Dutch army has 106,100 soldiers, of which 50,000 are conscripts.

France is having no trouble maintaining its army. Roughly 280,000 peoplen are liable for conscription each year, of which the armed forces only needs about 248,000. The period of service is 12 months.

A French peculiarity is the use of roughly three per cent of the conscripts *in the gendarmerie for police work out in* the country, although they remain subordinate to the Defence Ministry.

Various "civilian services" exist on an equal status with "service to one's country." These include assignments as teachers or engineers abroad — as a kind of development aid volunteer. Roughly 1.5 per cent of the conscripts grasp this opportunity.

Another possibility is to join the police and other technical auxiliary services. Roughly one per cent of all conscripts do this. All these services also last 12 months.

The ratio of adamant conscientious objectors has been a constant 0.9 per cent of respective applicant year totals for years.

One explanation is the varied range of alternative forms of "service."

A decisive factor, however, could be the feared and much-criticised interrogation procedure by a military commission for conscientious objectors.

In Italy military service is generally limited to twelve months.

In 1988 the navy was the last branch of the services to gradually lower its period of service.

Although the number of conscripts will be reduced in Italy during the 1990s the reduction will not be as substantial as in the Federal Republic of Germany, since the curve of the low birth-rate years does not fall so drastically.

There is no discussion there about an extension of military service.

On the contrary, politicians and military officials are examining whether the number of persons liable for conscription should be reduced by 20,000 to save costs.

Italy's Liberal Defence Minister Valerio Zanone would like to channel the funds saved into modernising the armed forces.

The period of military service in Spain has been twelve months ever since the Socialist government there reduced it by three months in 1984.

The alternative service, which will be extended in future to Red Cross units, lasts eighteen months.

The longer period in the social community service and the stricter examination of conscientious objectors has pushed their figure down to 1,225 for 1989 (roughly half a per cent).

The difficulties in Spain are connected with finding enough for the soldiers to do.

They start to get bored after about six months.

This can only be partly explained by the poor remuneration for their instructors, who often have to work elsewhere in the afternoons to ensure a standard of living comparable with a civilian occupation.

Although the situation has improved over the past 15 years there are still not enough funds to intensify technical training to the desired level.

In the Warsaw Pact countries the periods of military service are comparatively long.

The Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia keep their young men in the barracks for 24 months.

Anyone serving in the Soviet Red Fleet has to stay for 36 months. Military service lasts 18 months in East Germany and in Hungary.

Conscientious objectors in Poland are given the opportunity of working in a coal mine. In East Germany a "service without weapons" is possible in the "Spade Brigade."

The period of military service and the possibilities of conscientious objection may also be affected in future by the general mood of change in the most Warsaw Pact countries.

Hungary, for example, is considering the possibility of conscientious objection.

The two exceptions are Britain and Switzerland. The British army consists of regular soldiers only and is thus unfamiliar with problems connected with the length of military service or conscientious objection.

Switzerland is renowned for its militia. Basic training lasts 118 days, followed by regular exercises.

Just for the record: if the Federal Republic of Germany were to ask its citizens to do the same military exercises as the Swiss militia the Bundeswehr would consist of seven million soldiers.

(Die Welt, Bonn, 19 January 1989)

Continued from page 4

fundamental rights, which protect human dignity and human life and guaranteed freedom from bodily harm.

If someone is threatened by persecution, torture or the death penalty these fundamental rights guarantee a right to protection via asylum.

Like the constitution, these provisions are inviolable. The attacks on the right of asylum, therefore, are nothing but a trick.

Of course, it is possible to make political capital out of the issue. This, however, would cause incalculable damage to Germany's political culture and reputation.

Heribert Prantl

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 10 January 1989)

■ THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Brussels, Strasbourg, Luxembourg: round and round with the travelling circus

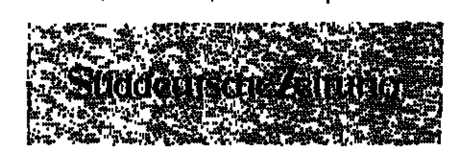
Brussels is Europe's capital, but the European Parliament is not allowed to have its seat there.

Not that this really matters at the moment, since sooner or later it will sit where it wants to and mayors from Oslo — with Norway long since a member of the European Community — to Palermo will vie for the honour of welcoming Europe's "guard of honour" for a few days.

Anyone who wants to take a closer look at Europe's patchwork, who wants to see how European parliamentarians freely vent their feelings and national-egotistic instincts, how little the historical frontiers have yet been overcome or how much the Community is seething need only pay a visit to Strasbourg and ask the Euro-MPs why they don't simply pack their bags and move to Brussels, where the Eurocratic rivals — the Council of Ministers and the European Commission — are in command.

Most Euro-MPS have been repeatedly rebellious since the first direct election in 1979 in the realisation that a truly equal say in the running of the Community will only be possible in the centre of power.

They have come a lot closer to achieving this objective thanks to the fact that the Political Committee chaired by the British conservative MP Derek Prag engineered a vote on a clever formula with which all legal obstacles have been negotiated.



After the European Court of Justice confirmed in September last year that the normal sittings of the European Parliament should take place in Strasbourg the assembly decided by 222 to 173 votes that extraordinary sittings, especially those discussing resolutions by the Commission and the Council of Ministers, should take place elsewhere, and they had Brussels in mind.

Some of the administrative staff in Luxembourg should move to the Belgian capital straight away.

France and Luxembourg, however, sense that this could be the beginning of the end for their Euro-cities.

The Gaullist Alfred Coste-Floret told the deputies that Strasbourg unites all of Europe's symbolic power.

The city, he said, was handed back to France in September 1944, and the minster to God.

"The Europeans are not yet ready for a European capital," a French Christian Democrat claimed.

His socialist colleague Georges Sutra added: "The European Community is not a state, so it doesn't need any capitals."

One parliamentarian from the grand duchy of Luxembourg complained that hundreds of families had moved to Luxembourg because of the Parliament. What are they supposed to do now?

Italian Euro-MP Marco Pannella suggested that the parliament should set up a sitting district, consisting of Luxembourg, the Alsace and the Saar regions, i.e. excluding Brussels.

Before the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established Jean Monnet already suggested making the Saar region a European district at the beginning of the 1950s.

The six member countries opted for Luxembourg at the time as the provisional seat of the ECSC and thus already documented their idea of a supranational territory within the Community.

For many Luxembourg MPs this has apparently continued to be a vision up to this very day, a vision which now looks like remaining unfulfilled.

One MP groaned that "one day we'll be meeting in Nice or who knows where."

Hardly surprising that the Belgians, with the sovereign serenity of the victor, argued that the Parliament must convene where it can meet the Council of Minister, the Commission and the press.

The current travelling circus at any rate makes the whole European idea look ridiculous.

The parliamentary committees gather in Brussels and the Euro-MPs carry out most of their daily work there.

Their library, however, and the general secretariat with its staff of almost 3,000 are in Luxembourg.

The entire documentation is compiled there, but the plenary sessions are held once a month for a week in Strasbourg, and only in Strasbourg.

A few years ago the Euro-MPs also gathered several times a year in Luxembourg.

Soon after the first direct election to the European Parliament this practice was dropped.

The path to Brussels was blocked. The member states chose Strasbourg.

After an office complex was set up for the parliamentary committees just a stone's throw away from the Council of Ministers and the Commission in Brussels the Council of Ministers made sure the parliamentarians didn't bribe the architects to smuggle in a plenary hall.

The Euro-MPs, therefore, move to and fro month for month with their tons of paper between Strasbourg, Luxembourg and Brussels.

At the beginning of September last year the incumbent president of the European Parliament, Lord Plumb, complained bitterly about this state of affairs to the Community heads of state and government leaders meeting on the Greek island of Rhodes.

Following a decision by the Council of Foreign Ministers in Brussels the Parliament had to submit its commentary within eight hours, an act requiring the production of 2.2 million pages of paper.

A total of 21 committee meetings and three plenary sessions were held in Brussels and Strasbourg on the subject under discussion, the Community's financing fund.

As the secretariat is in Luxembourg it is easy to imagine how awkward coordination is.

According to figures issued by the Political Committee this awkwardness costs over DM60m a year.

An extraterritorial European governmental district along the lines of the Washington model could have existed from the very start.

In 1951 the government of the kingdom of Belgium refused to let Brussels become the seat of the European Coal and Steel Community.

The Belgians insisted on the colourless steel metropolis Liège, where the Cockerill-Sambre industrial group ekes out its existence.

The member states were forced to choose Luxembourg as the provisional seat.

The parliamentary assembly of the ESCS made its way to Strasbourg, where the plenary hall of the Council of Europe was already available.

The subsequent attempts by the six original member states of the European Community to lay the foundation stone for a proper European capital in Luxembourg and turn the grand duchy into a model European state failed because of opposition from the grand duke and the bishop there.

All they feared was that the European Economic Community would place their small country under the control of foreigners.

When the European Economic Community was born in 1958 the six original members realised that it would only have one seat, only one capital.

It proved impossible, however, to reach agreement on a location.

In the meantime the reluctance to give the Europeans a proper "home" had turned into proper possessiveness.

France and Luxembourg started to fight for their institutions.

One reason was undoubtedly that Europe was bringing plenty of money into the country.

After the parliamentarians moved out of Luxembourg at the end of the 1970s despite the fact that a new plenary hall had just been built the Luxembourgeois government considered taking the case to the European Court of Justice.

It wouldn't have stood any chance of success there, since the plenum officially belongs to Strasbourg.

After the European Economic Community, the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Atomic Energy Commission merged to form the European Community the fuss about the seat was dropped.

Now Luxembourg and France are again called upon to do more to improve the appeal of their Euro-centres.

The government in Paris must share a great deal of the blame itself for the diminishing appeal of the Alsatian metropolis for European institutions.

In terms of traffic links Strasbourg is not far from the end of the world.

Only those who automatically book their rooms in advance month for month stand a chance of getting a hotel room.

The telephone network could be better. Everything's so arduous in Strasbourg.

The French Minister for European Affairs Edith Creson has promised that the city will be equipped with everything it needs by the end of 1992.

It looks, however, as if Brussels will move much faster.

Building work on a gigantic "International Congress Centre" in the Leopold district is to start mid-February.

The Centre will have a railway station undergound, shopping arcades and flats for the Euro-MPs nearby.

The Council of Ministers and the Commission are only a short walk away.

The whole project is being financed by Belgium's Société Générale at a cost of DM1.5bn.

Winfried Münster

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 24 January 1989)

■ MONEY

Another slap on the wrists for the banks

Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger

A second legal defeat has left the image of German banks tarnished. The ruling is a criticism of the way banks have been treating customers.

In November the Federal Court of Justice ruled against the practice of crediting monthly building-loan repayments only at the end of the year.

Now the court has ruled that cash deposits should be credited immediately to accounts. (A common practice now is to delay entering deposits until the following business day; if a weekend or holidays come in between, several days interest are lost.)

This fresh defeat means for the banks that they have lost a lucrative source of income, which covered at least a third of the losses incurred by payment transactions for private customers. The ruling has also harmed the banks' good name.

This is not the first time. During the stock exchange boom of the mid-1980s they forced on small investors one share issue after another as guaranteed profitable investments.

These investors suffered bitter disappointment after the stock exchange crash of October 1987, when no-one in the bank picked up the phone to accept orders to sell.

The banks were only prepared to talk to major customers who had fallen into difficulties.

Fuel was added to the fire a few months later by the Kloeckner bankruptcy whose worthless profit-sharing certificates the Deutsche Bank had offered to the public.

Then the banks gave their blessing and support to the flotation of the Coop retail chain shares on the stock exhange. Coop is now having to be restructured and the public prosecutor is involved.

Bonn is also examining if the banks have not written off too much to cover their loans to the Third World, so evading millions in taxes.

German banking is only coming to realise with difficulty that stiff winds are blowing in its face. When the Federal Supreme Court presented its verdict on mortage interests, many banks hesitated a long time before acknowledging customers' claims.

There has been a lack of far-sightedness as well in dealing with the Court's decision about credits for cash deposited. But the banks' central credit committee was quick to comment on the Court's decision, pointing out that the ruling did not affect transfers and cheque credits.

There is still the threat of a set-back here as well. Banks swiftly debit standing orders and transfers, but take days to enter credits.

Every bank decides at its own discretion how long a cash transfer will take and earns a lot of interest in this way.

In the looming legal wrangle the banks have a lot to lose and almost nothing to gain.

If the banks themselves were to introduce a maximum delay-period allowed for the credit of payment transfers now, which could be expensive, but it would put the banks back on the offensive.

Banking should be open for all to see and easy for customers to understand. Case law, tilted towards the consumer, drags the banks more and more into the public eye.

In the business world it has long been a custom to keep clients, business partners and competitors informed about business and profits. That creates confidence.

No bank, on the other hand, is obliged to report how well it has done. The protection the law provides here is not entirely unwarranted.

A temporary small loss could trigger of a run on the bank and so ruin what was fundamentally a healthy financial institution.

Regular information on a bank's profits would create considerable confidence, which would aid the bank in mastering other crises. Inexplicably banking is too scared of showing its cards. Bank confidentiality and mystery-mongering seem to be to many bank executive boards one and the same thing. A bank which keeps its customers at a distance must expect that without reason the worst will be assumed. The banks have it in their own hands to create more confidence among their customers.

Andreas Richter

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 19 January 1989)

Tomorrow's welfare state will be a burden on the young

Government and Opposition rarely get together to launch important reform measures, but it seems that this has happened in amending pensions legislation.

Despite the fact that the more concrete the discussions became between the CDU, CSU, FDP and SPD the more difficult they became, the "pressure for joint responsibility" welded them together.

The SPD profited most from this. The party can, at least, slip out of its constant role of fault-finder, and present itself as a partner in government with objections which are taken seriously.

Pursuing a strategy of confrontation was obviously too risky for the SPD. Everyone must keep an eye on the next election when dealing with the sensitive question of retirement pensions.

The SPD, the largest opposition party, is a government waiting in the wings to take over the reins of power.

The party has to prepare itself to fulfull tomorrow perhaps what it need only demand loudly today. That could easily all go wrong.

With so much inter-party harmony one would have expected a pensions reform worthy of the name. But that view would be way out.

The measures revealed so far are nothing more than an emergency dressing to hold the pension fund together for the next couple of decades. The real problems will only come after the year 2010.

The worst will occur in 40 years' time when 100 contributors will have to cover 138 pensioners. At present the ratio is 100 to 55.

The imminent reforms inadequately tackle the main problem of the drastic shift between old and young in the population.

To counter ideas of this kind Labour Minister Norbert Blüm said: "Who knows what is going to happen in 30 to 40 years' time?"

He has obviously disregarded the fact that with declining births and lengthening life expectancy statistics it is possible to make projections which show that Bonn's pensions policies do not reach far enough.

Bonn's aim has not been to reorganise but to reassure: this tricky matter will disappear from the headlines for the next few years at least.

This is to be achieved by cautiously strengthening the three financial pillars of the pensions scheme.

Central government will contribute more billions of tax-payers money; contributions will be increased by stages from the present 18.7 per cent to 20 per cent of gross salary; pensioners in the future will have to be satisfied with a net adjustment to their old age pension (this is done in secret now) and get used to retiring at a later age.

The coalition government and the SPD have wrestled about details, but this has been more electioneering than sensible precautionary policies.

The SPD wants to be labelled as a party which shows concern for women's interests, the FDP wants to see that civil servants' rights are not harmed. The interests of people under-40 today have fallen by the wayside. But they should be the main concern of pensions reform. Younger people will have to bear the financial burden of the welfare state of tomorrow, they will have to lessen the impact of the ageing of society with ever higher contributions for health care, pensions and unemployment benefits, and finance state expenditures with their taxes — this includes

Continued on page 8

Pensions

In July 1988

Per month	% of male pensioners	% of female pensioners	% of widows and widowers
DM2,400 plus	9	1	0
DM1,800 – 2,400	29	2	2
DM1,200 – 1,800	32	10	19
DM600 – 1,200	18	32	52
less than DM600	12	55	27

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THE WORKFORCE

Worries about increase in part-time workers not covered by insurance

More than 300,000 workers in the retail trade are not covered by social-security or medical insurance. This is because they are part-time workers earning below a certain amount, under which an employer is not obliged to make contributions.

Lorenz Schwegler, chairman of the commerce, banking and insurance trade union, refers to "a scandal."

Rita Süssmuth, president of the Bundestag, and Ulf Fink, chairman of the CDU's social affairs committee, say they regard with great concern, that employment of this kind in many industries is "getting out of hand".

Experts estimate that well over two million workers — 90 per cent of them women — are without any kind of social security coverage. More and more full-time jobs are becoming part-time or casual employment.

The truth is that only moonlighting is cheaper for the employer than part-time employment. Side-line employment means that the worker is employed for less than 15 hours a week and over the year earns no more than DM450 per month.

In this instance the job is insurance-exempt employment. In this way the employer then saves about 18 per cent in social benefit payments, which he would have to pay on top of gross wages, as well as other wage benefits. Only in rare cases are continued wage payments made for sickness or holidays.

Generally the employer picks up the flat-rate income tax, which is only ten per cent. The employee is paid DM450 net without any deductions of any kind.

The disadvantage is that the employee has no cover for sickness or unemployment. Furthermore he or she makes no pension contributions and so has no claim for an old age pension.

For many women the lack of medical insurance is no problem. They are jointly insured by their husbands. But they also get no sickness benefit or a pension.

It is assumed that many women know how to assess this kind of employment. By taking a part-time job they improve the family budget — even if it is as a char woman, assistant sales women or part-time secretary.

For a long time the SPD, Greens and trades unions have been alarmed by the increase in part-time employment. Their reasons: there is no coverage for social security benefits and abuses are routine.

The originally intention of part-time employment was to make it possible to give a helping hand, without any red-tape, in farm work, charitable organisations, sports associations or at peak periods in commerce, for instance.

It was intended that the employment on these terms should be an exception and not a general rule.

But many resourceful companies and even whole sectors of trade and industry have used the law for their own purposes. They operate exclusively with employees given work on the DM450-a-month basis, so saving all incidental wage costs, which could amount to 80 per cent of net wages.

This form of employment is exploited, for instance, in office cleaning, fast-food chains, the retail trade, taxi companies, and in many hotels and restaurants.

This form of employment opens up the way for abuses by employers and employees alike.

The courts and health insurance organisations are coming across more and more cases where an employee has four or more part-time jobs.

A woman, for instance, can earn up to DM1,800 a month by cleaning an office in the morning, on Saturdays working as a sales assistant, working as a taxi-driver in the evening and on Sunday putting in a few hours as a waitress in a restaurant.

According to the law this income is taxable and social security contributions should be paid.

Many employers are also not squeamish about tax dodging. For example employers can declare they have part-time employees, although the people named do not come to work.

The employer only supplies their names and pays DM45 flat-rate income tax, but saves at the same time more than DM200 in other taxes he should pay. That is profitable, facade employment.

Sometimes job seekers are forced to take up jobs exempt from social security benefits. They only get the job when they bring with them three wage tax cards from friends and relations.

Then, officially, the man's 90-year-old grand-mother is working as a casual worker. The unemployed man gets the full-time job and gets the wages for the four, allegedly working as part-time employees, but he has no social insurance coverage.

This is of course criminal, but it is estimated that there are about 400,000 cases of employment on these terms.

Most ought to be exposed quickly. Shortly a social security pass is to be introduced. It is proposed to set up a central registered, linked to this. Abuses can then be quickly discovered by a comparison of data.

Theoretically the tax authorities could do that now, but they are not in a position to do so.

How is it, then, possible to call a halt to the trend to part-time employment, when it is quite legal? Everyone concerned argues about this.

The trades unions would prefer to see that every job had to be covered by social security. But there are several disadvantages attached to that.

For many it would no longer be worthwhile going to work, if they had to deduct 18 per cent from the low pay for social security contributions.

It would not help the health insurance organisations either. With minute contributions they would have to offer full sickness coverage — bad business for them.

The situation would be different for unemployment and pensions insurance. Their coverage is in line with contributions paid.

But there would certainly be problems for old age pensions insurance. At the best the smallest pension would be paid for part-time workers — which would soon reopen the discussion on minimum pensions.

But the main point would be that many part-time workers would stop working because of the pay.

It is doubtful whether they would take on full- or part-time jobs. There would be bottlenecks in any number of sectors of trade and industry.

The problems would be the same if the Labour Minister kept to his proposals and made part-time employment more expensive for employers and so more unattractive.

The first step has already been made. In tax reforms, scheduled to be introduced in 1992, the flat-rate income tax due will be increased to 15 per cent.

In addition, the Labour Ministry is considering whether the employer should also not be obliged to make social security contributions. It would then be left up to the casual worker himself to decide to make the employee's share of the contribution or not.

The trade, banks and insurance union wants to go even further. It would like to negotiate a wage agreement in which part-time workers must work at least 20 hours a week and automatically be subject to social security obligations.

Anyone who was then paid DM600 gross a month would get DM400 net. These arrangements limit the possibilities for casual work. Yet there is certainly a demand for workers of this sort.

The proposals made by Rita Süssmuth and Ulf Fink are suitable to prevent abuses: only ten per cent of the working hours in a company or organisation should be done by part-time employees.

That would be enough room for manouevre for most firms.

Axel Brower-Rabinowitsch

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 13 January 1989)

Continued from page 7

the increasing costs of civil service pensions. The average wage-earner retains at present 67.3 per cent of his earnings for himself. By the year 2040 this proportion will drop to only 52.6 per cent. Taxes and social welfare contributions will soak up almost a half of a worker's wages.

How hollow Bonn's promises that "performance will be rewarded again" now sound.

Demands for new social welfare measures must be looked at in this light. The pressure for more justice in pensions insurance is reasonable; new regulations, benefiting the family and women, are appropriate — but pension funds should not be put under strain.

Pension insurance funds do not need to be told of new ways for spending more money, but they do need thick cushioning for the difficult years after 2010.

Bonn's reform plans do not present a sensible approach. Despite the rare unity, which the government coalition and the SPD can count on, they do not have enough courage to come to decisions which will make it possible to create the vital reserves for the future.

This means that pension funds will be reformed to the disadvantage of the young.

Wolfgang Bok

(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 25 January 1989)

AVIATION

Let's play flying — but for real

Flight simulators are expensive pieces of equipment, but they are much cheaper than the real thing to train pilots in. In addition, as Eckhart Klaus Roloff found out when he went for a ride in one, it doesn't hurt when you crash and you are less likely to get air-sick. He wrote the story for the Bonn- based weekly, *Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt.*



An emergency at the push of a button . . . simulated Boeing 737 takeoff. (Photo: Lufthansa)

Cologne Cathedral quickly disappears in the distance as we speed past; another landscape; now there are clouds, thick clouds and wind as well. Then I bring the aircraft into land.

In the normal course of events I would have been sick, but not in this cockpit. It is a flight simulator Nato E-3a Awacs produced by to CAE (Canadian Aviation Electronics) and installed at the military airport at Geilenkirchen, west of Cologne. It is held aloft and moved by an undercarriage consisting of four hydraulic cylinders.

Half an hour later, the chief pilot, a Dutchman, handed me a small note with a friendly gesture: a computer message to indicate that my first landing had resulted in a bad crash.

That reassured me. I had assessed my capabilities correctly. I needed more than just a few minutes to master such an aircraft.

But I do have a much better idea of the value of using simulators to train pilots — even if pilots are critical of the sluggish steering and trimming of this early model.

For more than 40 years, flight simulators have been important for pilot training. They are becoming more sophisticated all the time. Following a series of crashes by low-flying aircraft in Germany, their use has become a political issue.

Chancellor Kohl himself is urging stepped up simulator training; the development of simulators has been up until now only indirectly promoted through the Bonn Research Ministry.

Extended use is clearly called for, but at the moment the software which would enable simulators to reduce substantially the amount of low-level training in the air does not exist. By 1993, it might.

Even the most sophisticated simulators are not able to imitate the complexities of this form of low-level flight.

Bonn wants to buy the newest CAE military simulators which experts reckon could make between five and 10 per cent of low-level flights unnecessary.

CAE is a Canadian firm which set up a German subsidiary in Stolberg, a town west of Cologne, in 1961 when the European Starfighter programme was just getting under way. The firm is the market leader, making 52 per cent of all simulators.

It makes computer-controlled complete or part simulators to order, depending on what the customer wants. It trains and offers advanced training for both air crew and technical staff.

CAE simulators are installed in about 20 military airfields around the country. Nato pilots spend months training on them.

CAE staff install and, as is more than occasionally necessary, make modifications. They put applicants for pilot training through their paces to test their aptitude.

Simulators are among the most expensive items in aviation technology. But they repay their investment quickly and are used almost without interruption.

A Tornado simulator costs roughly double that of the aircraft itself, but CAE estimates that an hour on the Tornado simulator costs only between eight and 15 per cent of the cost of an hour in the machine itself.

The aim is to achieve the maximum amount of reality with landscape, airfields, buildings, weather situations and military manoeuvres. The flight instructor, who sits behind the pupils, can enter mistakes and create emergency situations as he likes.

He can put trainees under such pressure that what they do can scarcely be called simulation or a game: an overheating engine, a leaking fuel tank, a



pancake landing, loss of brake pressure, or altimeter failure can all be imitated simply by pushing a knob. So can 100 other irregularities. Almost perfect illusion.

This month, Lufthansa has taken delivery of its ninth simulator from CAE. Its cost: 33 million marks, making it the most expensive. It is to train pilots to fly a jumbo, the Boeing 747-430.

The main reason for the cost is a new type of visual display system and advanced computer controls.

Training pilots costs Lufthansa about 50 million marks a year. An hour of real flying — that can not be avoided — costs 42,000 marks in a Boeing 747-400. In a simulator it is only about 1,000 marks.

Even experienced Lufthansa pilots must go through four-hour test sessions every six months at the Frankfurt centre — and if they don't pass it, they don't get their licences extended.

Last year, the airline's eight simulators put in 30,000 hours of work (about 10 hours a day each on average). Thirty foreign airlines use up about a third of that time.

Flight simulation at low levels is not only to train pilots but also to research technical challenges.

The aerospace group, MBB, has spent many years investigating simulator techniques. It says that a control system it has now developed "opens up completely new perspectives."

It has developed the electronics and the software to produce a data bank which portrays the land under the aircraft as a digital map.

The company's newspaper, *Newtech News*, explains how a sensor is used to constantly adjust the aircraft's position — flying blind.

The system is called LATAN (Low Altitude Terrain Aided Navigation) and is designed to operate at altitudes lower than 3,000 metres (about 9,800ft).

Specialists at the Bonn Defence Ministry have examined it; now it is to be tested on Tornados. LATAN makes it possible to identify immediately any course change and to make sure the flight path precisely is adjusted to the terrain.

MBB claims that even in bad weather, the system could, for example, control a passenger aircraft completely from the furthest contact point from the airport until it touches down on the runway.

It claims that no current navigation aide does as much. All leave something for pilots to do.

Simulators are also used in power-station technology, manned space travel and shipping.

The best-known trainer for sea captains is SUSAN (Schiffsführungs- und Simulationsanlage).

SUSAN, developed by Krupp Atlas Elektronik (Bremen), is in Hamburg.

It cost 16 million marks and, at a cost of 1.5 million marks a year, is modified in line with the latest technical developments.

Jens Froese, a shipping expert, says that no other training aide is so cost-efficient, so safe or so effective. No other enables instructors to monitor so closely what pupils are doing.

Eckhart Klaus Roloff

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 20 January 1989)

■ PHILOSOPHY

Indignation at an unworldly theory about the stone

Philosopher Martin Heidegger was born in 1889. He achieved fame when he published *Time and Being* in 1928. His philosophy has been described as atheistic existentialism mainly because *Time and Being* is concerned fundamentally with being-in-the-world. At a conference in Munich to celebrate the 100th anniversary of his birth, Japanese and German experts quarrelled about philosophy's purposes after Heidegger. This article was written by Hans-Martin Schönherr, who works with the research institute for political ecology at Munich University. Early this year two books by him on the theme of this article will appear: *Die Technik und die Schwäche — Ökologie im Anschluß an Nietzsche and Heidegger* (Edition Passagen), and *Von der Schwierigkeit, Natur zu verstehen — Entwurf einer negativen Ökologie.* (S. Fischer).

Has the stone a world? That was the question which seemed futile to the participants in the first conference to be called in the 100th anniversary year of Martin Heidegger's birth.

Although all the members at the conference in Munich appeared to agree that man — and also animals to some extent — has a world, Professor Heinrich Rombach from Würzburg was indignant about the observation that the stone has no world.

On the contrary, he said, the world of stones fills the internal life of the earth. He maintained that man is just a residuum of stones and receives his vitality from stone.

What does all this have to do with the conference's theme, *Destruction and Transmission*? Or what bearing does the sub-title of the conference have on this discussion: *On the purposes of philosophical history after Martin Heidegger*?

The question of stones seems to have even less relevance to a meeting between Japanese and German Heidegger experts.

It is appropriate for Heidegger's thought to be the subject and reason for an academic meeting between two cultures, Occidental and Asian, because in Japan in fact Heidegger is taken up intensively and extensively translated into Japanese.

By questioning whether man emerges from stone, posed by Professor Robert Spaemann, the organiser of the Munich conference, did he not have in mind the wrong course of enquiry? Spaemann is one of the Christian-conservative and ecologically-involved philosophers in the Federal Republic.

Nevertheless, the problem is not erroneous, neither in respect of Heidegger's thought nor in view of the current philosophical debate.

Even if the ecological crisis was not directly a point of concern, it stands not only in the background but frequently in the forefront of the discussion, although this took place in the exquisite atmosphere and green surroundings of an annex to the historic Nyphenburg Castle, and although some of the sponsors came from the Siemens Foundation and the VW Foundation.

Furthermore, Martin Heidegger is not only the foster-father of existentialism and pioneer of hermeneutics, but also the founder of modern technological philosophy.

He saw in technology the end and apogee of western metaphysics, as it was developed from Plato to Hegel. In this sense he described technology as the metaphysics of the nuclear age.

Professor Dieter Jähnig from Tübingen said that the background of the destructive contacts of man with nature explained the renunciation in Heidegger's later thinking of Eurocentrism as well as ideas of centring the universe on man. His intention was not to downgrade man, according to Jähnig.

Nevertheless he removed nature from the centre and had to develop a new relationship with her. At this point Spaemann pointed to two tendencies in Heidegger's thinking.

One, apocalyptic, viewed technology as the greatest danger. A contemplative one called for us to re-think man's position in the world.

Hartmut Buchner's lecture (Munich University) sought for planetary dimensions in Heidegger's thought; Heidegger maintained that environmental protection alone was too short-sighted.

All participants at the conference agreed with Heidegger the philosopher that concern about environmental protection did not answer the problem exhaustively, but that in a technological era the place of man in the world, his relationship to himself as well as to his traditions has become unsure.

Various papers read at the conference made it clear that after Heidegger the ecological crisis could not be overcome in purely technological terms. Equally new or old modes of viewing nature were also of little help.

In this respect Rombach's suggestion, that the world could recuperate by the Japanese art of being, caused participants to smile.

He said that Japan had succeeded in defending its cultural identity while at the same time exploiting technology to the full.

If, on the contrary, we want to overcome the devastation of the world with Heidegger's skill, we must re-think the position of man on earth, according to Buchner.

Various speakers voiced the view that what is at stake is to make clear to man, who has become so wrapped up in technology, that neither his existence nor, to a less extent, his natural environment can be exhausted by technology. We must, therefore, comprehend what technology is doing with man and nature.

RHEINISCHER MERKUR

Herrmann Mörchen, a well-known Heidegger student and interpreter, warned against taking Heidegger's criticisms of environmental protection as being too resigned. He said that what was at stake, and Heidegger went along with this, was that instead of pure technological progress we had declined to learn.

This was clearly in conflict with traditional interpreters of Heidegger thought, who concerned themselves in opening up his thinking with reference to the major problems of the moment, and those for whom late Heidegger, the technological philosopher, had abandoned his original existentialism.

The well-known Heidegger expert Professor Otto Pöggeler from Bochum explained that he simply did not understand Heidegger's writings on technology. He said that Heidegger had ignored the analytical, experimental characteristics of modern technology.

At this point the discussion fizzled out. The conference participants avoided taking up the post-modern comeback and interpretation of Heidegger.

Not one of the 30 academics present represented positions which criticised Heidegger's reasoning or his philosophy of language.

Only occasionally did arguments of the post-modern debate flare up, mainly when it was stated that truth was not explained by excluding error, but that truth itself can be enfolded in error, indeed that the greatest error could be made by those who, as Herrmann Mörchen expressed it, understood error in just a negative sense.

Nevertheless there was general agreement that the post-moderns' range of wares concealed Heidegger (according to Buchner) or had nothing to do with him (Pöggeler).

Jähnig expressed the idea, similar to that of the post-moderns, that occidental rationalisation completes technology in philosophical-historical terms.

According to Jähnig, Heidegger recognised only after *Time and Being* was published, that philosophy could not simply view this course of events from the outside, but that it was itself a part of this process which must be understood.

Heidegger's "Kehre" (renunciation of the analysis of being) was the motive behind the second theme of the conference, Transmission.

Spaemann pointed out that Heidegger himself was aware that understanding implied transmitting, equally between various philosophies and various languages and cultures. He himself became involved in Asian culture.

Thus the destructiveness of a history shows us the path to thought and understanding as transmission, equally from Heidegger's philosophy as other concepts in other cultures, a history which has reached its apogee in technology and which uproots man from his world.

Naturally this poses the question how Heidegger, with his special terminology, rooted in the German language, can be translated into other languages.

Professor Ryosuke Ohashi from Kyoto, the best known Japanese Heidegger interpreter, posed the question of translating and understanding, inter-culturally as well as with regard to human experience of the world and nature in general.

The comprehensibility and the transmissivity of experiences of another, be it man or animal, is based in our being-together-with in the world, according to Ohashi.

He said that he saw himself in the world as a fish did. That the fish's being can be recognised in some way or other by man, stems from an original partnership in the world, a beginning, which is unencumbered, unconscious, and which cannot be founded in anything historical or causal.

The exercise of understanding is making a circle, not an explanation, not a determining or defining factor.

In this connection Asian teaching has an entré into the European assimilation of Heidegger.

Possibly it is the other way round but in any event it is one of the reasons why Heidegger is studied intensively in Asia today.

In this way man creates a world by transmission, a world in which animals may only play a small part. Herrmann Möchen spoke of the "world poverty" of animals, which could, however, be a considerable preference of animals as opposed to man.



Time and being . . . Martin Heidegger. (Photo: Ullstein)

Even if the stone has no world its worldlessness, its restoration and tranquility remains. Spaemann referred to the specifics of non-human being, which we cannot achieve. At the most we comprehend it as something similar to man. In this connection biology is only a reconstruction of life.

The question on which the discussion focused was whether this unencumbered understanding and transmittion was in a position, as a new way of thinking for man in the world and his relationship to nature, to open up technology, in its dominating character as power over thought.

Or did the dominating power of techology devour all our abilities to transmit and understand, just at the point where the unencumbered quality in them can be recognised?

That is a basic question in all intercultural exchanges and for the opportunities for fertilization, linked to these inter-cultural exchanges, which we need urgently as a progressive industrial society.

But can we really learn anything from Japanese thought? What do the Japanese learn from our thought? This question remains unanswered of course.

In some of the few public lectures, which took place in the university but unfortunately without discussion, Walter Biemel, the well-known Heidegger scholar and biographer, looked closely at the problem of transmission, mainly in regard to literature.

Heidegger wrote about the problem of translating in his *Vom Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*. The translation of an art work should allow the truth to become visible, showing the conflict between world and earth. According to Biemel, art should light up the dwelling of man in the world.

Transmitting or translating, as a means of understanding a work, has something to do with the stone, which shares the world with us.

Language, such as technical language geared solely to information, is hardly in a position to allow us to participate in the presence of the stone.

If in an informed society the dwelling of man on the earth is becoming more and more destructive, art can help us as a transmitter in the search for a new dwelling in the world, according to Biemel.

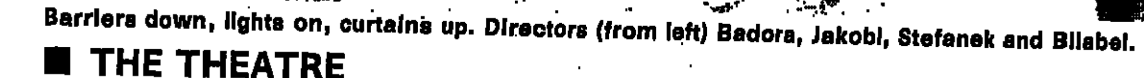
Does not art teach us to understand man's being not just in technical terms?

There can be no talk of excessive optimism at this conference. Nevertheless it was symptomatic of the times and reflected Heidegger's relevance to the present. Also, indirectly, the explosive force of the post-modern and ecological debate.

Hans-Martin Schönherr
(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 20 January 1989)

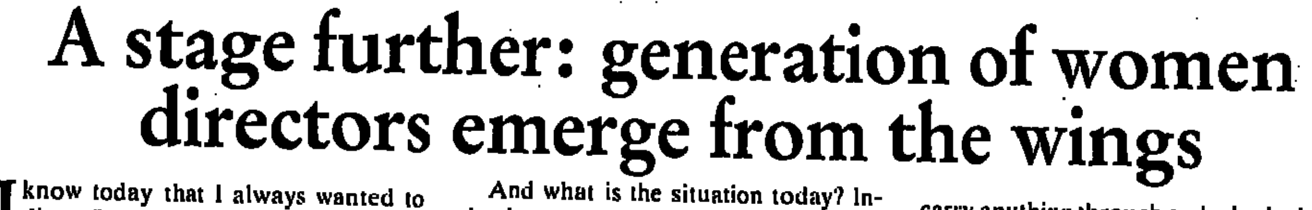






Barriers down, lights on, curtains up. Directors (from left) Badora, Jakobi, Stefanek and Bilabel. (Photos: Anneliese Heuer, Ute Schöndel, Renate Kirbach)

■ THE THEATRE



A stage further: generation of women directors emerge from the wings

"I know today that I always wanted to direct," says Lore Stefanek. "I just did not realise it earlier, despite the fact that I had plenty of signs to show what I really wanted to do."

Lore Stefanek is now 45 and one of the middle generation of theatre directors. At the beginning of the 1960s she studied acting at the famous Max Reinhardt School in Vienna.

"At that time I could see nothing in becoming a director. It just never entered my head," she said.

Her experience was the same as many women's. Ten, 15 years ago there were any number of major disadvantages for women in the male dominated theatre world, barring them from becoming directors.

Some of the views, discriminating against women as directors, were that they did not have the staying power to carry anything through, they lacked leadership qualities and had no authority.

Barbara Bilabel recalls: "It was more difficult for me than for a man, but that was mainly my fault. I did not have enough confidence in myself at the beginning." She spent years in self-discovery.

"I had never really known that one could have one's own thoughts, one's own viewpoint. Women of my generation simply had not learned that."

Frau Bilabel has worked in Basle and Wuppertal. She put on her first production in 1981 when she was 43. Early on she sensed that she would re-create the stories and characters of a drama quite differently to men. For 20 years she had done the costumes and décor for their productions.

Her crucial experience came when Niels Peter Rudolph was appointed manager of the Schauspielhaus in Hamburg. A group of friendly theatre people gathered around him.

"We all sat in the garden together," she recalls, "and the men made great plans, while we women, oddly dumb, sat with them, made a few pithy remarks and were otherwise responsible for fetching the coffee."

It was the sense of discontent that made these women form a working group of their own. It was in these circumstances that the idea of putting on their own production of *Medea* saw the light of day.

Barbara Bilabel's début production was bloody, aggressive and attracted a lot of attention. It was her admittance ticket to the small team of women directors.

And what is the situation today? Indeed, more and more women are producing plays in our theatres, but are these women really evidence of equality among the sexes? Or, in view of the continued dominance of men in the theatre, are they not alibis to stave off equality?

Lore Stefanek said: "I think that there is a paternal tendency among theatre managers towards women. I'm not being critical. I think there is a paternal preparedness to give women a chance to direct in the theatre."

Frau Stefanek was born in 1943. She was a champion of the co-determination era (when the supremacy of the director was replaced by a pooling of views by the whole production team) of Peter Palitzsch and Hans Neuenfels in Frankfurt during the 1970s.

She made her début as a director there with Jean Genet's *The Maids*. This was once more a production with an all-female team. She now works in Vienna and Wuppertal.

Women theatre directors of the middle generation, actresses such as Hannelore Hoger or even Lore Stefanek, women literary managers such as Astrid Windorf and Ellen Hammer, came into the theatre at a time when it seemed hard to believe that women would take over the main responsibility for a production. That means having a domineering role putting on the play.



There was indeed Angelika Hurwicz, for many years a Brecht actress who was encouraged by the master himself to direct.

There was also Ruth Berghaus in East Germany, later manager of the East Berlin Ensemble. She concentrated on musicals, mainly the works of her composer husband Paul Dessau.

But these women seemed like exotic orchids in a theatre garden, who were not quite cut out to the male, authoritian director personality.

A few women only were able to transfer to directing in the course of the liberation movement, which made its mark in the theatre clearly late in the day. But it was only women who had previously gained recognition and contacts in other artistic spheres.

Apart from these women, who already had a firm place in the theatre world, there were few from the armies of assistants to the producer who could carry anything through and who had enough self-confidence to dare to make the leap to becoming a director, as did Andrea Breth or Annegret Ritzel.

Or women such as Gabriele Jakobi, a theatre student. At the end of the 1970s, while doing her examination thesis on the Frankfurt co-determination venture, she went to the theatre, slipped into an assistant's job which was open and then worked with Lore Stefanek on her production of *The Maids*, the first all-women production in the Federal Republic.

She moved to Cologne with a director friend. Surprisingly, and as she now realises, far too early, she made her first attempt at directing.

She took what she was under contract to take, mainly unattractive plays by women writers — she was soon inwardly at the end of her tether.

She had to draw back, forced to do so by the battles at final rehearsals, the awareness that she did not know enough yet, and a sense of being alone.

She said: "To be able to direct you have to have the confidence of the actors, and six or seven years ago women just did not have this."

Instead there were continuous challenges to the woman director's authority; she was always under pressure to prove herself, as a woman "being a man." It was wearing having someone always lying in wait to expose weaknesses.

Gabriele Jakobi accepted the consequences of her experience and withdrew. She went into seclusion for a year. Then, along with an actress friend, she conjured up a mighty project out of nothing. In 1985 she established an independent group and prepared an impressive production of *Penthesilea*, which was also invited to go to Moscow for the German Festival.

In this work Gabriele Jakobi proved herself. It brought her back to the large theatres in Berlin and Düsseldorf.

Anne Badora currently works in Augsburg and Ulm, but in the mid-1970s she was told by a professor at the Max Reinhardt School in Vienna that directing in the theatre was men's work.

She wanted to prove that the contrary was true. She was able to get into the directing class of the school, and was the very first women to do this.

But that was only the first hurdle at a time when women held 40 per cent of the jobs as director's assistant in theatres in this country, yet few were able to move up to become directors.

After training and many years as an assistant to such theatre greats as Klaus Michael Grüber and Peter Zadek, Anne Badora began to slog it out in the provinces, mostly in a director's appointment for productions where the job had become vacant at short-notice.

More than once she noticed that when young, male directors made production mistakes or had work problems, these were put down to inexperience, while as a woman she was criticised. Remarks were made such as: "Don't you see. We told you that you couldn't do it."

Andrea Breth is of the same generation. She was working in Freiburg when she gained attention by directing a production of Frederico Garcia Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* with Lore Stefanek in the title role. Then after some reverses she worked in Bochum.

Two years ago she caused a furore with her production of Julien Green's *South*.

Her Freiburg production of the Lorca play was invited to the prestigious Berlin theatre festival. Her production of *South* was also invited to Berlin and created a sensation.

In the traditional critics' survey by the magazine *Theater heute* she was selected to be director of the year, the first woman to receive this accolade in 25 years.

There are now many young women directors, with a new awareness and chances of moving up the ladder.

These women pursue the traditional course of training: after a couple of years as assistant to the director they move directly to putting on their own production.

Friderike Vielstich, 32, said: "Perhaps I just had the good fortune to belong to that generation of women who grew up with the liberation movement. It was clear to me from the beginning that I could direct if I wanted to."

But it was not only the growing self-confidence among women which contributed to a change of awareness in the theatre. It was also not just a sense of goodwill and generosity among theatre managers, which led to more and more women being offered contracts as assistant directors over the past few years.

Then in the 1980s the directing flair of the greats stagnated. Suddenly it was noticed that the (male) theatre managers such as Peymann, Neuenfels and Zadek, Peter Stein and Niels Peter Rudolph and the others had achieved much in their turbulent and moving theatre. But, while not hampering, they had neglected to promote the younger generation of directors.

There was no excitement. A new way of looking at things was lacking. There was a need for fresh, gripping forms of expression. Friderike Vielstich said:

Continued on page 12

■ VIVISECTION

Money the decisive lure as cheaper alternatives become available

No-one knows the exact figures, but according to the trade associations of the pharmaceuticals industry roughly 2.2 million animals were killed in laboratory tests in Germany in 1986.

Ninety per cent were white mice and rats. They died in the laboratories of research institutes, supervisory authorities and industrial companies during tests for cosmetics, medicaments and detergents.

The most spectacular attempts by campaigners against cruelty to animals to free the "victims" did not concentrate on the white rodents.

Their campaigns generally focused on the cruel experiments carried out on dogs, cats and monkeys. Such publicity-conscious action has apparently been successful.

According to a report in the *New York Times* in 1988, American consumer goods giants, such as Avon Products, Procter and Gamble or Colgate-Palmolive, are now using between 60 and 90 per fewer animals in their research programmes.

They admit that one of the main reasons is their fear of the influence anti-cruelty campaigners may have on consumers.

Another determinant factor is the availability of alternative methods which could make many of the tests on mammals superfluous.

These substitute tests generally take a lot less time and are cheaper.

Protests also appear to have had an impact in Germany.

In a survey by the magazine *Natur* (7/87) major West German chemical groups, for example, Bayer and Hoechst, as well as the Swiss giants Hoffmann-La Roche, Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy rated the "significance of substitute methods as 'high', 'substantial' or 'very high'."

They did, however, add that it would be impossible to do without tests on animals altogether.

Defined in very narrow terms, alternative methods mean experimenting without rats, mice or cats.

Generally, the definition also includes test methods involving a reduced number of test animals or at least methods in which their suffering can be alleviated.

Medical computer technology, with which pharmaceuticals researchers look for new medical drugs, is one of these alternative methods.

Whereas in the past hundreds of possible active substances were tested on tens of thousands of animals before a single effective substance was found, the trajectories of the new pharmaceutics can be projected with the help of an efficient computer.

With electronic support the researchers are now also able to check out the side effects of the promising candidates, without a single animal dying in the process.

In Germany, this form of screening is particularly popular among researchers working on new drugs against virus infections, pain and inflammation.

In addition, scientists also turn to computer findings when examining whether a substance is toxic or carcinogenic.

With the help of software from the



firm Health Design in Rochester the architecture (chemical structure) of a new substance can be compared with that of already known substances.

This computer programme encompasses everything discovered by toxicologists and cancer researchers during the past decade.

If this method fails to produce definite results a test developed at the University of Munich may be able to help out.

The veterinary surgeons Josef Willmann and Walter Kugler discovered that, under certain conditions, fertilised hen's eggs can continue to develop in a test-tube outside of their protective shell.

Willmann and Kugler have been able to inject various substances into the "hatched" embryo up until its tenth day of life.

The advantage of this method is that chemicals can be added to or removed from the embryo and then examined with pinpoint precision.

This is not so easy in the case of an embryo of the same age in an egg shell.

Scientists have already been discussing the pros and cons of the HET (Hens's Egg Test) toxicity test for over two years.

Many firms already use this test, which is also based on fertilised hen's eggs.

Professor Niels-Peter Lüpke from the Institute of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of Münster have probably thus developed an alternative to the Draize test, an extremely cruel procedure.

During the Draize test various substances are trickled into the eyes of albino rabbits — generally in exaggeratedly high concentrations — and researchers then examine the animal's reddened eyes and swollen capillary vessels to assess how the human eye will probably react to these substances in new hair shampoos, skin ointments or insect-repellents.

It looks as if chemicals can be tested and examined just as reliably using the HET methods, in which the pain-free choroid of the hen's embryo is used as a test medium, as using animal tests.

Cells of the human cornea cultured in a test-tube provide an alternative to the HET method.

Cultures of animals and human cells often give a clear answer to questions relating to toxicity and irritation.

Techniques involving in-vitro cultivated tissues have the advantage of enabling exact standardised repetitions and of providing results fast.

Researchers in Freiburg, for example, have developed cell cultures with which they can examine promising anti-cancer drugs without have to resort to the previous method of artifically creating a tumour in mice.

Since the thalidomide catastrophe almost thirty years ago all producers of medical drugs examine whether their new products could have a damaging effect on developing fetuses.

The thalidomide scandal took place at that time despite previous tests on animals because thalidomide was by and large harmless as a sedative for the pregnant woman herself but not for the fetus.

This teratogenic (malformation of the fetus) effect was not examined by the drug manufacturers.

For such teratogenicity tests the pharmacists normally need hundreds of test animals.

Except when they use the method developed by the British biologist Oliver Flint of injecting the undifferentiated cells of a mouse embryo with a given substance and then letting a second uninfluenced culture from the same embryo grow parallel to the first in a different test-tube.

If there are any detectable difference in the number of cells — counted automatically with the help of a video camera and a computer — the there is then reason to suspect that the substance could damage human embryos and fetuses.

In subsequent animal experiments, during which a lot less rodents may have to eventually die, the scientists can then control and confirm their suspicions following the test-tube experiments.

Yet although more and more alternative methods are now being marketed the pharmaceuticals firms have still not stopped their tests on animals.

The fact that these experiments are often legally required and many alternative methods are not yet legally sanctioned is one explanation.

Campaigners against animal tests also claim that many scientists even demonstrate a proper "macho" behaviour during the often abominable tests. They "consume" the animals en masse without thinking about the consequences.

This is permitted according to the Prevention of Cruelty Against Animals Act which came into force on 1 January 1987.

Section 1 of this Act specifies that "no-one is allowed to inflict pain, suffering or damage on an animal without a proper reason."

But what is "proper" and who decides what it means? The wording in Section 9 of the same Act stating that experiments with animals should only be carried out to an "extent which is absolutely essential" is equally vague.

Once again, the question is who interprets the meaning of the law?

In borderline cases researchers will undoubtedly decide in their own favour.

Many scientists are apparently unaware of the progress many of their colleagues have made in the field of alternative methods. Critical researchers at any rate have complained about this situation.

In the USA, for example, five scientific journals have been established during recent years dealing exclusively with substitute methods for animal tests.

Yet even the opponents of these tests do not call for a total ban on tests on rodents, cats or dogs.

They realise that, at least up to now, experiments on animals have been indispenable when paving the way for new operation techniques.

Humane

Their objective is simply a "more humane" protection of the animals, even though this may sound rather paradoxical.

Medical researchers, for example, could give the animals a general anaesthetic before carrying out their experiments in order to spare them any pain.

Experiments which solely serve to promote the scientific career of individual researchers or to educate students, however, are vehemently rejected.

With a bit of imagination alternatives can also be found for medical instruction.

Future veterinary surgeons could try out their skills of resuscitation following heart failure by using a special plastic animal developed by Professor Charles Short at the Cornell University in New York.

The model records electronically whether the supply of air is sufficient and whether the "patient" has been handled correctly.

Before this plastic substitute was created researchers had to bring the hearts of healthy dogs and cats ~~to a~~ standstill — and not all the animals survived the experiments carried out on them by students.

Despite the many and vociferous protests of the anti-cruelty campaigners money will be the decisive factor.

Drug manufacturers are beginning to discover that the substitute methods can be a lot cheaper than animal experiments.

The steps towards a marketable medicine in future, therefore, will probably be computer screening, cell cultures, tests on patients and — now and again — tests on animals.

Inge Maisch

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 20 January 1989)

Women emerge from the wings

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"The student protest of 1968 had worn itself out, and plays directed by women were the new thing.

"It was worth looking in at the theatre again, at least to find out what the others, the women, were doing.

"The interest in directors from East Germany here began about this time. There was simply a need for new people, new ideas."

Hannelore Hoger said: "It was about time as well. It was inevitable that we women no longer had to go round begging but that offers to direct plays were made to us as a matter of course."

Hannelore Hoger is a great actress, well-known for her film and TV appearances. She did not have to wait long for her first directing assignment.

She was offered a contract by the Staatstheater in Darmstadt. She now works mainly in Düsseldorf and Vienna.

She said: "In this job a woman has to demonstrate that she can do the work. But she must be allowed to make many errors and be just as bad as are so many men in this profession."

Eckhard Franke

(Saarbrücker Zeitung, 21 January 1989)

■ MEDICINE

Cancer victims face more than just medical problems — much more

The doctors did their rounds in the morning: "Six or seven of them stood around my bed and were talking to each other. I couldn't understand a word.

"I was full of despair, but no-one asked me how I felt."

This was just part of a depressing account by a 53-year-old cancer victim of her personal experience following a hospital operation.

The reaction by the other women in the discussion circle in Bad Pyrmont showed that many of them had had similar experiences.

One of the other patients described her impressions: "The best thing is to hand over your tumour at the hospital reception desk, at least that will be treated well. But no-one there is interested in how much you suffer."

Does the system of hospital care break down when the diagnosis of cancer shatters the foundations of a person's previous sense of being securely embedded in a "normal" life?

What do people expect from their environment when the sudden closeness of one's own death makes life seem like an illusion and everday activities such as watching television, going shopping or visiting friends suddenly lose their meaning?

These were just some of the questions considered during a three-day meeting of self-help groups of women suffering from cancer in Bad Pyrmont.

The meeting marked the 10th anniversary of the existence of these groups in Lower Saxony.

One of the first official advice centres was set up by the workers' welfare association in Hildesheim in 1978.

In the meantime the organisation runs seven such offices in Lower Saxony (in Hildesheim, Göttingen, Gifhorn, Celle, Nienburg, Einbeck and Alfeld).

The helpers there feel that their main task is to promote the organisation of more self-help groups and then support their activities.

Irene Fiedler from the workers' welfare organisation in Hildesheim is familiar with the problems facing cancer sufferers from her many years of experience.

"Anyone who suddenly feels like an outcast from the world of the healthy following the alarming diagnosis of cancer, and anyone who has to accept that something dreadful has forced its way into their lives, needs the help of people who are suffering the same fate," says Frau Fiedler.

Despite the tremendous range of medicines, apparatuses and therapeutic possibilities which can sometimes be used with a certain degree of success in the fight against cancer, the cancer victim is often regarded as someone who is condemned to death in the eyes of healthy people.

He is are felt to be a disruptive factor, someone who brings others down and makes them feel inhibited during conversations.

Among other cancer victims, on the other hand, they are able to cope with their suffering, accept their fate and realise that it's possible to live with this illness.

The meeting in Bad Pyrmont was intended as a thank-you to the many can-



cer sufferers who had helped and given courage to their fellow patients over the years.

By hiking, swimming, going for a stroll through the town or just having a chat together they try to forget the problems facing them day in, day out.

Yet anyone suffering from a disease which kills 170,000 people in the Federal Republic of Germany every year finds it very hard to take their mind of their main problem.

Cancer sufferers frequently appraise the present in terms of an unfulfilled past.

Everything one has failed to do in life becomes visible and cancer victims often feel that they have to make up for lost time.

Women who have already been fighting against the disease for between three and five years no longer ask themselves the question: why me?

They are tormented by mistrust and fear. "Who will help me when the pain gets worse? Do people notice that I've got cancer?"

One 42-year-old woman tells how she keeps on tidying up her flat and sorting out documents: "You reach a stage, I suppose, when you feel that every day could be your last."

A farmer's wife explained how she kept her illness a secret for two years in the village where she lives because people would have otherwise stopped buying eggs at the farm.

During her stay at a health resort one housewife even experienced how the cleaning service refused to clean the clothes of patients from the "cancer clinic".

Others in the discussion circle agree that many people think that cancer is contagious like the plague or tuberculosis.

Above all, people suffering from cancer feel left on their own by doctors, whether in the clinic or in the surgeries.

Doctors are apparently too preoccupied with their search for malignant tumours and secondary growths (metastases).

Many of them fail to help the patient cope with their suffering or inform them about the various forms of treatment.

One woman in the group had some drastic things to say about doctors: "My doctor hit me over the head with the diagnosis of cancer as if he was talking about athlete's foot.

"Then he asked me to sign a form declaring my consent to an operation, and after that everything was just routine."

After Peter Wolf, a doctor and psychotherapist from Hanover, tried to move into the experiential world of the patients who seemed outwardly so courageous and composed their fears and despair turned into aggression.

"I don't want to hear it. What's the point of such insights now? He ought to leave us alone," some of the patients shouted and left the room.

The doctor, who advocates fighting cancer biologically, expressed his opinion that cancer is not a local phenomenon which can be eliminated by operations, ray treatment and chemotherapy, but that it represents an illness of a whole body and mind.

He claimed that it is rooted in a person's life-style and his attitude to life.

He maintained that the malignant tumour is an expression of deeply-rooted conflicts which already existed years before cancer began but which were not realised or were suppressed by the patients themselves.

The women in the discussion group complained that "everyone has got a cross to bear" and asked the doctor "Who is happy or really content anyway?"

In comparison with people suffering from other serious illnesses the cancer victims in the self-help groups are at least able to see their illness in relative terms.

Furthermore, they refuse to see their suffering as a kind of punishment for some mistakes they have made or for something they have failed to do. Most of them view their situation as bad luck or fate.

Some regard the illness as a challenge and try to conquer cancer with the help of their own mental energies.

They often develop astounding powers which substantially improve the quality of their lives and their chances of curing the illness.

Despite many successes in individual fields medicine has been unable to discover a clear organic cause of cancer.

This explains why there are neither binding guidelines nor generally valid concepts for the treatment of patients.

The sufferers themselves often feel like guinea-pigs for the testing of new methods. What they need is professional help from doctors and nursing staff.

They also require the help, especially after a stay in hospital, of relatives and friends, for whom cancer is often a taboo subject and who often find it difficult to cope with the strain of caring for a cancer victim.

The work of the advice centres, therefore, includes concern about the relatives. Very few cancer sufferers call for an extension of their lives at all costs.

During the time which remains — months, years, perhaps decades — all they want is to be able to live with a little less discomfort, without pain, and die in dignity.

This is an understandable and fulfillable desire.

Eyke Gerster

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 21 January 1989)

Cowboy cosmetic surgery clinics warning

North Rhine-Westphalia's Health Minister, Hermann Heinemann (SPD), is calling for tougher controls over cosmetic operations by fringe clinics. This follows reports of surgery leaving people seriously injured.

He referred to cowboy operators hiring unqualified medical staff to perform surgery using inadequate equipment at profiteering prices on people who want their face or figure improved. The law in this area is unclear.

Heinemann doesn't want to ban cosmetic surgery at private clinics. That would clash with freedom-of-trade principle. But he wants to force operators profiteering from human vanity to at least be careful.

Together with the president of the North-Rhine medical council, Professor Horst Bourmer, Heinemann warned against false promises of the "ideal figure for the rest of your life."

A growing number of people are being lured to clinics by aggressive advertising and are often subjected to "highly dangerous operations."

Even operations which should be harmless are frequently risky because of inadequate equipment.

Heinemann referred to cases in which people had died following operations or suffered brain or other serious damage caused by "thoughtless and profithungry" cosmetic surgeons.

In collaboration with the medical council he announced the development of "concrete standards and rules" with which the government would be able to force private clinics to provide adequate technical equipment and staff for their cosmetic operations.

Bourmer described cosmetic operations which are not necessitated by accidents or illness as "simply superfluous."

He criticised the lack of clear laws in this field, in which unqualified doctors or even "colleagues who come rushing along from abroad" carry out operations without the necessary expertise.

The cases quoted by Heinemann sound unbelievable: one clinic left 20 patients outside the door of a hospital as they were "almost bleeding to death" after cosmetic operations.

Some of the patients had to undergo operations and stay in hospital for up to two weeks.

In one big city on the Rhine there is a private clinic with six beds in the side wing of a hotel.

The clinic, without any technical equipment at all, offers a whole range of surgery. The hotel reception answers if anyone rings up to find out more.

Then there was the case of a patient who paid DM58,000 to get rid of unwanted flab.

During the operation, a mistake led to a brain standstill; the patient now needs permanent care and attention.

Heinemann: "To put it exaggeratedly, it's apparently easier to close down a snack bar because of a lack of hygiene than to do anything against medical operations carried out for reasons of sheer profit lust."

In view of the legal uncertainty all politicians can do is warn about the risks.

According to a Health Ministry survey 15 of the roughly 100 private clinics in North Rhine-Westphalia are involved in cosmetic surgery.

How many of these can be regarded as shady enterprises is uncertain. An operation costs between DM40,000 and DM60,000.

Professor Bourmer, however, emphasized that the warning does not apply to "our excellent plastic surgeons", but exclusively to the "Professor Brinkmanns" (a senior consultant in the popular TV series *Black Forest Clinic*) who use their scalpel as if they were working on a sculpture and who promise that the result will be the "ideal body silhouette."

Karlegon Halbach

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 21 January 1989)

THE MASS-CIRCULATION PRESS

A blunt instrument dripping with red and black

The mass-circulation press lives from lust and love; fear and horror. It is the bludgeon end of the newspaper industry.

Its headlines ensure that the slowest reader gets the message. What less sensational papers publish on an inside page, the sensational press plays up at the front. Its reporters are allowed to write about everything, as long as it's no more than 80 lines long.

Every morning, 5.7 million copies of popular papers are sold, dripping black of soul and red of blood (the predominant colours are black and red).

But, since 1985, the six biggest of the breed (*Abendzeitung* — known as *AZ* — and *tz* — short form for *Tageszeitung* — in Munich; *Hamburger Morgenpost*; *Express*, in Cologne; *BZ* in Berlin; and the biggest of all, *Bild Zeitung*, which is published simultaneously in several cities) have between them lost a million in circulation.

In December, a veteran, the Frankfurt *Abendpost/Nachtausgabe*, folded. Does this all mean that the sun is setting over Sunset Boulevard (a mass-circulation paper is a *Boulevardzeitung* in German)?

The time of day used to be important in a paper's name: *Morgenpost* (Morning Post), *Mittag* (Midday), *Abend* (Evening), *Acht-Uhr-Blatt* (Eight o'clock Paper), *Nachtausgabe* (Night Edition).

They used to be printed in the middle of the day, distributed in the afternoon and read in the evening. Now the rhythm has changed.

They still appear in the evening, but the competition for sales is the following morning when the late editions appear.

Lord Northcliffe founded the *Daily Mail* in London in 1896 — the first illustrated popular paper in Europe. Instead of dry reports with commentaries like traditional papers, he introduced topics about daily life. He created a women's page and placed advertisements on editorial pages. *The Daily Mail* was described as "the busy man's newspaper."

Northcliffe's legacy was his definition that "a real story is what someone somewhere wants hushed up. Everything else is advertising." Because of his success, Northcliffe was appointed to take charge of Britain's propaganda during the First World War.

In Germany, only *Bild* has reached a comparable level of market domination and dextrous manipulation. *Bild* was founded by the Springer group in 1952.

It climbed to a circulation of 4.3 million copies a day, making it the biggest street-sales newspaper in the world.

The growth was at a cost. Papers sold on the street used to bring international issues to a national readership. *Bild*, like other German popular papers, has tended to become regional.

Bild has its main edition in Hamburg but has nine regional editions with a total of up to 27 local pages. Divide and rule.

Does this mean that the mass-circulation papers are coming to cater only for people from the same region? Three foldings in the past 25 years indicate that newspapers aimed at a national audience do not have much future.

Mittag, produced in Düsseldorf, lasted from 1950 to 1963; *Abend*, in Berlin, was founded in 1946 and closed in 1981: and *Abendpost/Nachtausgabe*, started in 1948, closed in 1988. All three carried a wider range of items than the current popular press. All three used punchy headlines, but underneath, there was always something to read.

Mittag was renowned for its leading articles and its feuilleton pieces. It steadfastly maintained its ruinous format right to the bitter end.

The congenial *Abend* was for many years a bright liberal opponent of the Springer press. It had influential political commentators on the staff.

Abendpost, in Offenbach, was once the oldest supraregional popular paper in Germany. For a long time, even after its merger with the Frankfurt paper in 1966, *Nachtausgabe*, ran playful items and old-world charming pieces from everyday life.

But none of them were able to foot it with *Bild*. Günter Prinz was editor of *Bild* from 1971 until 1981. He increased its circulation from three million to five million.

He compared mass-circulation and serious papers with cars: the first is like a racing car, the second like a limousine. "In the popular press, you feel every bump in the road."

The three deceased papers were too dignified to follow closely readers demands, to pander to their wishes. *Abendpost/Nachtausgabe* did polish up its image but its layout and jumping-jack presentation remained merely a bad copy of the Frankfurt edition of *Bild*, which first appeared in 1978.

The Hamburg-based *Morgenpost* faces a similar challenge. It was founded in 1949 and once reached a circulation of 400,000. This has fallen to 135,000.

It has earned a few sobriquets: Mottenpost (Moth Post), Nuttenpost (Streetgirl Post).

In spite of wholesale changes including political direction, *Morgenpost* continues to bring the raw and the bloody into the open in the best tradition of the butcher.

Wolfgang Clement was editor for two years before resigning last year to go



back into politics. He says: "You can't sell the mass-circulation papers with politics any more."

Is there a type of mass-circulation journalism apart from the *Bild* approach? Michael Spreng is a former *Bild* reporter who since 1983 has been editor of the Cologne *Express*. He says *Bild* is only number one where there is no strong regional alternative.

Express puts out three regional editions in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Bonn and has a daily circulation of 430,000. Part of his formula: "If in doubt, we use a local story rather than a scandal from Beverly Hills."

The other part of the formula could be something originating from Lord Northcliffe: investigative journalism, tight, alive and, as a rule, reliable.

Express got to the bottom of the "Kiessling affair" (in which a Bundeswehr general was sacked after charges that he had regularly frequented a Cologne homosexual bar. The charges were not backed by evidence, the general was reinstated and a Cabinet minister came within an ace of having to resign.)



Bringing the whole world down to a small format.

It also was the first to publish secret papers about Bonn's involvement with the American SDI (Strategic Defence Initiative, or Star Wars) programme.

It runs many interviews with politician and, in contrast to the asthmatic shortness of most populars, often runs stories with pictures to greater length, often on several pages. This happened after tragedies at Lockerbie when the PanAm jumbo jet exploded, and after the air disasters at Ramstein and Remscheid.

In a bid to offset the power of *Bild*, five other populars help each other out. Every afternoon, the editors of *Morgenpost*, *Express*, *BZ*, *Abendzeitung* and *tz* telephone each other their headlines. Sometimes photographs and complete stories are exchanged. Favourites are inside sports stories and local scoops.

The sheer size of *Bild* is why *AZ* and *tz* in Munich don't get in each other's way.

Tz's, editor, Hans Riehl, remembers how in the early years after the paper was started up in 1968 anything was allowed if it helped it to keep pace with *Bild*. Even espionage against the ally, *AZ*.

Riehl: "I used to ring every afternoon. I changed my voice and said, hullo, here is advertising. What have we on the front page today?. And they would tell me."

Munich has five dailies, more than any other city. *Abendzeitung*, founded in 1948, sets the pace. It is tending towards becoming a subscription paper (50,000 of its 250,000 copies) and editor Uwe Zimmer says the time is coming when it will throw off the damaging image of the popular paper.

For a long time its format has been along traditional lines. It has a feuilleton of repute and now — an innovation for the popular press — intends employing its own staff for a business section.

Like a careful father, it takes its readers by the hand and introduces them to slimming cures, offer health advice, organises fund-raising for charity, runs tramping days and trips, and even gets involved in voting for the Queen of Munich. Its penchant for local themes does involve a certain risk of declining circulation.

Zimmer says the demand is for an upgrading of content — less sex and crime and porno and cancer cures and spoon bending. The one item that no tabloid will drop is the pin-up girl, a lingering relic of the 50s.

The question is if this subservience to reader demand is a formula for success.

Most of the popular press is pretty tame in comparison with the British version. The market leader there, *The Sun*, brings cripples, freaks, two-headed babies and royal bedroom stories to the breakfast tables of the nation.

It recently paid the highest libel damages in press history: 1.2 million pounds. By comparison, *Bild* is harmless.

But even at *Bild* itself, broad changes are being made. Since May last year, the editor has been Werner Rudi, 38. From his snow-white leather chair, he oversees the 700 journalists across the nation.

The young high flier who used to be with stablemate *Auto Bild*, says: "We can't run a newspaper for the 90s with concepts of the 50s." He is going for the themes of youth and environment. He intends to avoid using the right-wing oriented paper for shin-kicking political opponents.

He wants more Zeitgeist and he even refers to the change of accent as perestroika. He wants to learn from the advertising industry. His paper was — like the rock music business — both advertising and product in one.

"Advertisers no longer slam their products down on the table. They now move in slowly, in a circle, by telling stories." Text and themes in future would "be like little feature films," which is one of the oldest popular press principles there is.

But where are the million readers who, say the statistics of the Bonn newspaper proprietors' organisation, have stopped reading popular papers since 1985?

The great majority have stopped reading *Bild*: it sells almost 900,000 fewer copies today than in 1985.

The fault is not only the Wallraff effect or disgruntled readers but also the banning of bingo, which the paper ran for years as a cost-free lottery for readers (Günter Wallraff, an investigative journalist, joined the staff of *Bild* under an assumed name and wrote a book about the paper's practises).

The head of Springer's board, Peter Tamm, sighed: "It is discouraging to see just what a paper's success depends on."

Other papers also justify their changing fortunes: television wins the race to get the first photograph; at holiday times, readers are staying away from the newspaper stands longer; and above all, the new small-ad papers — combined circulation of about 50 million — have

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CHILDREN

The Gang of Four tackles little people's big problems

The Children's Commission is housed in a hard-to-find building behind the Bundeshaus, House of Parliament, in Bonn. There are four members sitting on it, selected by the inter-party procedural standing committee of the Bundestag.

The "Gang of Four," as they are known by their parliamentary colleagues, are Herbert Werner (CDU-CSU), Wilhelm Schmidt (SPD), Norbert Eimer (FDP) and Waltraud Schoppe (Greens).

The commission-members have agreed among themselves that all their decisions shall be unanimous — and that is a development as new as the commission itself, which was set up in summer last year.

The commission is meant to exercise "a control function to some extent," as former Bundestag president Philipp Jenninger put it, ensuring that the Bundestag did more than it has done so far in the interests of children. But the commission does not have a right of veto.

They can, however, draw the attention of their colleagues in Parliament to this or that measure which does not serve children's best interests as well as it was thought it would.

Commission-member Norbert Eimer has three children of his own and a foster child. He pointed out one example of measures that do not have the desired effect.

He said: "There is a lot wrong with guardianship legislation." He gave the example of a child who was given to a foster mother soon after birth. Some years later the child's natural mother appeared and demanded to have the child back.

According to present legislation neither the foster parents nor the child can do anything about this situation, he said.

In Norbert Eimer's view liability regulations are another example of well-intentioned legislation not working in practice as it was assumed it would.

If owners put up a prohibition sign on a swimming pond, or a stretch of fallow land, or a quiet street or one with little traffic, then they have no responsibility. But if there is no sign and they tolerate children playing there, and an accident occurs, then the owner is legally responsible.

There are enough tasks for the commission to do. The commissioners say these include an educational system which wears out child and teacher, the increasing incidence of mental and physical violence against children (particularly among families affected by unemployment), the increase in child labour, that drug-addiction is spreading among younger and younger children, and what is particularly shocking: that children attempting or committing suicide are getting younger all the time.

Last year 13,000 children attempted to commit suicide. One thousand died, because they did not want to live any longer.

Violence against children takes place everywhere, and frequently social conditions contribute considerably to this, conflicts are resolved by violence in housing which is too small, in homes for the homeless, where within the narrow space people get on each other's nerves.

Violence raises its ugly head in road traffic; in 1987 almost 41,000 children were involved in accidents. Literally, the places where they can play have been concreted over. Their world gets increasingly smaller — and more dangerous.

The commission is well aware that it cannot tackle everything all at once, so members have resolved to deal with speed limits in residential areas first. They are lobbying for a speed limit of 30 kilometres per hour in built-up zones.

It will be interesting to see whether the small "Band of Four" can make much headway against the powerful car lobby.

If the commission is able to form the required majority in Parliament to bring about this change then it will show that it is not being used as an alibi, and that the commission is not just talking about making the world more friendly to children's interests but doing something about it.

The complaint is as old as it is true: children have no lobby of their own in the Bundestag. Society is not fair to them. As new Bundestag president Rita Süssmuth put it, society is "unaccustomed to children," and for this reason there are fewer children in the population.

The Federal Republic does not have the lowest birth rate in the world without good reason. Within an affluent society families with many children are impoverished and regarded as anti-social.

This implies that members of Parliament must do something about taxes and for some time they have been unable to cope with the housing question.

But the four commissioners cannot at present do much more than "influence the atmosphere." Waltraud Schoppe has something else in mind. She would like to see a right of veto, a kind of Ombudsman function for the commission.

She is herself the mother of two grown-up children. She knows where there are failings in the system.

"I am a little impatient," she concedes. In her view "the commission is just a name, which has very little influence. Basically there is still nothing being done for children."

She is of the view that the commission is only an arrangement to "calm people down." She said: "We can only make contacts and talk to organisations."

Herbert Werner, who has six children of his own, does not see the commission's work in such a negative light. He regards it as a step forward that parents, children and organisations have direct access to the commission to discuss worries and problems.

But he is also a little concerned that the commission is without teeth, particularly when it comes to child abuse. On this point he is of the view that we define violence far too generously.

In this respect the commission looks to the work of the Norwegian Ombudsman, Malfrid Grude Flekkoy. Social Democrat Wilhelm Schmidt has circulated information about her work to the commission.

She has successfully initiated legislation against the mental and physical abuse of children, which came into effect in Norway two years ago. Our Children's Commission has had to set its sights lower. But the four members of the commission hope that their example will encourage the establishment of children's representatives in the federal states and local communities.

Many problems can only be solved on the spot. They can be put right with good will and someone there tenaciously showing concern.

Norbert Eimer gave another example of the need for persistence in children's interests. He said that in one local community a parents' initiative group battled unsuccessfully for a children's playground 20 years ago.

Today there is another parents' initiative, partly with the same signatures to the appeal as before, against the children's playground, which is now to be built. Their own children have grown up in the meantime.

The matters which the commissioners have taken up, apart from the 30-km speed limit, have been moderate. But if their weak position is taken into consideration, the four committed commission-members have shown courage in the problems they have tackled.

They want to see information distributed about children infected with the aids virus, and better care for families involved.

Bundestag president Rita Süssmuth is of the same mind as the commissioners. She is a partner in their affairs who cannot be underestimated.

In addition the commission has other demands such as higher limits for radiation protection regulations and more controls on top athletes.

Unfortunately the four commissioners talk a lot about children but rarely with children. They are dependent on experience within their own family and among their friends and acquaintances — and on the many letters they get.

Children know exactly what is bothering them. One wrote: "Ten years ago we were promised that a playground would be built. Then three years ago lorries turned up and built an artificial hill. Instead of a playground there is a rubbish dump there. It's just mush and dogs do their business there. So we children must play in the street."

Two hundred children signed a letter which stated: "We would like to see that holiday stays are made cheaper for children, better television programmes for children, more play and sport facilities and cheaper teaching aids."

In their letters to the commission children repeatedly complain about senseless prohibitions, write about their father's unemployment and the poverty of their families.

Perhaps one day the commission will be able to initiate a debate in the Bundestag about the misfortunes of children in our affluent and allegedly enlightened society.

Renate Faerber-Husemann
(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 22 January 1989)

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taken a quarter of the small ads away from the dailies, and with it the second most favoured reading matter — the ads themselves.

When the mass-circulation press sneezes, social intercourse gets infected. An important social uniting factor is in danger: gossip.

With their circus layouts and confetti text, popular papers have managed to reduce the entire world to small format. Although the German papers perhaps have not cultivated the same delight as their British cousins in inventing stories and dredging up sensational trash, they are still doing a pretty good job of fuelling fantasy out there on the Hauptstrasse and Nebenstrasse of the nation.

Michael Möninger
(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 11 January 1989)

Bashings and abuse behind closed doors

STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN

Every ten minutes, a child somewhere in Germany is beaten so badly it has to be taken to hospital.

Eleven thousand children a year are assaulted and 100 of them die. Many more cases go unreported.

Walter Bärsch, chairman of the West German Society for the Protection of Children, estimates that "300,000 are constantly physically, mentally or sexually abused."

Private and official organisations believe that 150,000 children are constantly sexually abused by members of their family or relations.

Answering a question in the state Parliament Herbert Heinemann, Minister for Social Affairs in North Rhine-Westphalia, said that neglect, ill-treatment and abuse of children was a major problem in every *Land*.

In wide sections of society the misfortunes of children were a taboo subject. This was particularly true of the sexual abuse of children.

There were "only" 10,000 cases reported to the police every year — just a fraction of all sex offences.

There was a growing readiness among the public to come to grips with the problem, but there was a lot of work still to be done to make people understand the situation before the figures would decline.

He said: "To make the protection of children effective mothers and fathers, doctors, public employees in kindergartens, family advice centres and homes for batter women, must bear in mind the possibility that children, with whom they are involved, have been subjected to violence."

Elisabeth Trube-Becker, an expert on medical law and the author of the book *Gewalt gegen das Kind*, (Violence against the child), said that babies and very small children are especially subject to abuse in the family.

Most of these small children suffer until the neighbours notice something or until they go to school, where their maltreated bodies and broken minds stand out.

In some cases abuse is discovered when the mother or father takes the child to the doctor or to a clinic — but usually only when the child is in danger of dying.

Crying and signs of injury draw attention to the situation. But it is very difficult to trace the mute sufferings in the family of sexually abused children. The cases which Elisabeth Trube-Becker has come across of abuse without injuring the child up to sadistic atrocities, are unspeakable.

Children of both sexes are victims of sexual abuse. They suffer mentally and many later kill themselves.

There are also cases of pure mental abuse of children. There is not the slightest sign of physical maltreatment. The parents simply do not like the child. There are 100,000 of such cases in the Federal Republic alone.

Elisabeth Trube-Becker said: "The consequences of this withdrawal of love from the children are particularly difficult for the development and later life of the child."

Hans Willenweber
(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 7 January 1989)